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**THE TEMPLE PRIMERS**

**DANTE**

By

**EDMUND G. GARDNER, M.A.**

Author of "Dante's Ten Heavens"



## DANTE

*From the Painting by Domenico di Michelino, in the Cathedral of Florence (1465)*



# DANTE



BY · EDMUND · G  
GARDNER · M.A.

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*N.B.*—The references are to the *Divine Comedy* in the “Temple Classics” and the Oxford *Dante*. *Inf.*=*Inferno*, *Purg.*=*Purgatorio*, *Par.*=*Paradiso*, *V. N.*=*Vita Nuova*, *Canz.*=*Canzone*, *V. E.*=*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, *Conv.*=*Convivio*, *Mon.*=*De Monarchia*, *Epist.*=*Epistle*, etc. Carlyle’s translation of the *Inferno*, Wicksteed’s of the *Political Letters*, Wicksteed’s and Church’s translations of the *De Monarchia* are usually quoted. With some exceptions, the *Vita Nuova* is quoted in Rossetti’s version; the word *gentile* has purposely been rendered sometimes ‘gentle’ and sometimes ‘noble.’ The numeration of the *Epistles*, *Canzoniere*, etc., is that of the Oxford *Dante*, but its text of the *Minor Works* has not always been rigidly followed.

# DANTE

## CHAPTER I

### *Dante in his Times*

#### 1. *Before and after Benevento*

**Pope and Emperor.**—The twelfth and thirteenth centuries include the last and most familiar portions of the Middle Ages. It is the period of chivalry, of the crusades and of romance, of scholastic philosophers and Provençal troubadours; the period which saw the development of Gothic architecture, the rise of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, the elevation of Catholic theology into a system. The Dante student may, perhaps, read these two centuries as a vast historical poem, in which mankind's two divinely appointed guides according to the Dantesque conception—the successor of Peter and the successor of Cæsar—are engaged in deadly conflict, and in which dimly discerned phantoms of Charlemagne and Hildebrand are the heroes:—

‘Observe you ! quit one workman and you clutch  
Another, letting both their trains go by—  
The actors out of either's policy.  
Heinrich, on this hand, Otho, Barbaross,  
Carry the three imperial crowns across,  
Aix' Iron, Milan's Silver, and Rome's Gold—  
While Alexander, Innocent uphold  
On that, each Papal key.’

—*Sordello*, Book v.

The three dark centuries from Charlemagne to Hildebrand, ‘between the two that nearly seemed to touch,’

form the prologue. The poem, if we may call it so, opens in February 1076, when Roland of Parma bore to Gregory vii the defiance of Henry iv; it closes in February 1266, on the plains of Grandella near Benevento, when Charles of Anjou, the brother of St. Louis and the Church's champion, defeated Manfredi of Sicily, the son of Frederick ii and representative of the imperial cause, and the legate of Pope Clement refused Christian burial to the fallen king (*Purg.* iii. 124-132). An epilogue would bring us down to the Jubilee of Boniface viii in 1300, soon to be followed by the exile of the Papacy.

66 **Triumph of France.**—This battle of Benevento marks an epoch in Italian history. It ended for the time the struggle between the Roman Pontiffs and the German Cæsars; it initiated the new strife between the Papacy and the royal house of France. Henceforth the old ideal significance of 'Guelf' and 'Ghibelline,' as denoting adherents of Church and Empire respectively, becomes lost in the local conflicts of each Italian province and city. The imperial power was at an end in Italy; but the Popes, by calling in this new foreign aid, had prepared the way for the humiliation of Pope Boniface at Anagni and the corruption of Avignon. The fall of the silver eagle from Manfredi's helmet before the golden lilies on Charles's standard may be taken as symbolical. The preponderance in Italian politics had passed back from Germany to France; the influence of the house of Capet was substituted for the overthrown authority of the Emperor (*Purg.* xx. 43, 44). Three weeks after the battle Charles entered Naples in triumph, King of Apulia and Sicily; an Angevin dynasty was established upon the throne of the most potent state of Italy.

**Art and Letters.**—And in Italian literature, also, a new epoch commences. Hitherto Sicily, *Trinacria terra*, had been the chief seat of Italian culture. Its poets had almost given to Italy a literary language. 'The Sicilian vernacular,' writes Dante in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*,



'seems to have gained a renown beyond the others; for whatever Italians produce in poetry is called Sicilian, and we find that many native poets have sung weightily.' This he ascribes to the fostering influence of the imperial rule of the house of Suabia: 'Those illustrious heroes, Frederick Cæsar and his well-begotten Manfredi, showing their nobility and rectitude of soul, as long as fortune lasted, followed human things, disdaining the bestial; wherefore the noble in heart and endowed with graces strove to cleave to the majesty of such great princes; so that, in their time, whatever the excellent among Italians brought forth first appeared at the court of these great sovereigns. And, because the royal seat was Sicily, it came about that whatever our predecessors produced in the vernacular is called Sicilian' (*V. E.* i. 12). The house of Anjou made Naples their capital, and treated Sicily as a conquered province. After Benevento the literary centre of Italy shifted from Palermo to the republican cities, Florence and Bologna. At Bologna, within the next eight years, St. Thomas Aquinas published the first and second parts of the Summa Theologica; and the poetry of the first great singer of modern Italy, Guido Guinicelli (*Purg.* xxvi. 97, 112), rose to spiritual heights undreamed of in the older schools, in his splendid ode on Love and true Nobility: 'Within the gentle heart Love shelters him.' And, in the sphere of the plastic arts, these were the years that saw the last triumphs of Niccolò Pisano, 'the Father of Sculpture to Italy,' and the earliest masterpieces of Cimabue, the teacher of Giotto (*Purg.* xi. 94-96), the shepherd boy who came from the fields to free Italian painting from Byzantine fetters, and who 'developed an artistic language which was the true expression of the Italian national character.'

## 2. Dante's Childhood and Adolescence

**Birth and Family.**—Dante Alighieri, in its Latin form Alagherii, was born at Florence in 1265, probably in the

latter part of May, some nine months before the battle of Benevento. His father, Messer Alighiero di Bellincione di Alighiero, came of an ancient and honourable family of that section of the city named from the Porta San Piero. Although Guelfs, the Alighieri probably came of the same stock as the Elisei, decadent nobles of supposed Roman descent, who took the Ghibelline side in the days of Frederick II, when the city was first involved in these factions after the murder of young Buondelmonte in her 'last peace' in 1215 (*Par.* xvi. 136-147). Among the warriors of the Cross, in the Heaven of Mars, Dante meets his great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida. Born in 1090 or 1091, Cacciaguida married a wife from the valley of the Po (probably Ferrara or Parma), Aldighiera degli Aldighieri, was knighted by Conrad III, and died in battle against the infidels. None of Cacciaguida's descendants had attained to any distinction in the Republic, excepting Brunetto di Bellincione, Dante's uncle, who fought for the Guelfs at Montaperti in 1260, where he was in charge of the *Carroccio*, the battle-car and rallying point of the army. Besides Cacciaguida and his son Aldighiero, or Alighiero, who was the first to bear the name, and who is said by his father to be still in the purgatorial terrace of the proud (*Par.* xv. 91-96), the only other member of the family introduced into the *Divine Comedy* is Geri del Bello, a grandson of the elder Alighiero and cousin of Dante's father, a sower of discord and a murderer (*Inf.* xxix. 13-36), whose violent and well-deserved death had not yet been avenged.

**The Florentine Republic.**—As far as Florence was concerned, the real strife of Guelfs and Ghibellines was a struggle for supremacy, first without and then within the city, of a democracy of merchants and traders, with a military aristocracy of partly Teutonic descent, who were gradually being deprived of their territorial and feudal sway, which they had held nominally from the Emperor in the country districts of Tuscany. Although the party

names were first introduced into Florence in 1215, the struggle had virtually commenced after the death of the great Countess Matilda in 1115; and had resulted in a regular and constitutional advance of the power of the People, interrupted by a few intervals. It was in one of these intervals that Dante was born. The popular government (*Primo Popolo*) which had been established on the death of Frederick II in 1250, after a victorious course of ten years, had been overthrown in 1260 by the disastrous battle of Montaperti, 'the havoc and the great slaughter, which dyed the Arbia red' (*Inf.* x. 85, 86). The patriotism of Farinata degli Uberti saved Florence from total destruction, but all the leading Guelf families were driven out, and the government remained in the power of a despotic Ghibelline aristocracy, under Manfredi's vicar, supported by German mercenaries. When Manfredi fell, the Ghibelline nobles, after an ineffectual attempt to come to terms with the great Guilds, were expelled from Florence, together with the German troops, on St. Martin's Day, November 11th, 1266; and the Guelf exiles, who had fought under the Papal banner at Benevento, returned.

The new government, the 'fourth constitution of the Republic,' although under the suzerainty of Charles of Anjou, was even more democratic than the *Primo Popolo*. There was a central administration of twelve Ancients, with a council of a hundred 'good men of the people without whose deliberation no great thing or expenditure could be done' (*Villani*, vii. 17). Then came the Captain of the People with his two councils; and then the Podestà with a special council, and the general council of the Commune. Both Captain and Podestà were alien nobles, and the latter was appointed by King Charles as long as his suzerainty lasted. The great Guilds had their own councils, and their consuls or rectors, while specially associated with the two councils of the Captain, were sometimes admitted to those of the Podestà; the nobles were excluded



from all these councils, excepting the special council of the Podestà and the general council of the Commune.

The defeat of young Conradin, grandson of Frederick II, at Tagliacozzo in 1268, followed by his judicial murder (*Purg.* xx. 68), confirmed the triumph of the Guelfs and the power of Charles in Italy. In Florence the Ghibellines had become a small minority. A newly constituted organisation, the Parte Guelfa or 'Guelf Society,' persecuted them and managed confiscated property. The future conflict lay between the new Guelf aristocracy and the burghers and people, between the *Grandi* and the *Popolani*; the magnates in their palaces and towers, associated into societies and groups of families, surrounding themselves with retainers and swordsmen, but always divided among themselves; and the people, 'very fierce and hot in lordship,' as Villani says, artisans and traders ready to rush out from stalls and workshops to follow the standards of their Arts or Guilds in defence of liberty. In the year after the House of Suabia ended with Conradin upon the scaffold, the Florentines took partial vengeance for Montaperti at the battle of Colle di Val d'Elsa (*Purg.* xiii. 115-120), where the Sieneſe were routed and Provenzano Salvani killed. It is said to have been Provenzano Salvani who in the great Ghibelline council at Empoli had proposed that Florence should be destroyed.

**Dante's Boyhood.**—It is not clear how Dante came to be born in Florence, since he gives us to understand (*Inf.* x. 46-50) that his family were fiercely adverse to the Ghibellines and would naturally have been in exile until the close of 1266. Probably his father, who seems to have been a notary, was of too little mark to be molested. A certain loneliness was Dante's lot from the beginning. He possibly never knew his mother, Donna Bella, who died soon after his birth. Her family is not known, though it has been suggested that she may have been the daughter of Durante di Scolaio degli Abati. Alighiero married again, Lapa di Chiarissimo Cialuffi, the daughter



of a prominent Guelf popolano; by this second marriage he had a son, Francesco, and two daughters, Tana, who married Lapo Riccomanni, and another, whose name is not known, but who afterwards married Leone Poggi. Dante never mentions his mother nor his father, whom he also lost in boyhood, in any of his works (excepting such indirect references as *Inf.* viii. 45, and *Conv.* i. 13); but in the *Vita Nuova* a 'young and gentle lady, who was indeed of my very near kindred,' appears watching by the poet in his illness. In the loveliest of his early lyrics she is described as—

'Adorna assai di gentilezze umane,'

which Rossetti renders—

'Exceeding rich in human sympathies.'

This girl, who from the context would seem little more than a child, is probably one of these two stepsisters; and it is tempting to infer from Dante's words that a tender affection existed between him and her. It was from Dante's nephew, Andrea Poggi, that Boccaccio obtained some of his information concerning Dante, and it would be pleasant to think that Andrea's mother is the heroine of this ode (*V. N.* 23).

Sources.—Our sources for Dante's biography, in addition to his own works, are primarily a short chapter in the *Chronicle of his neighbour Giovanni Villani*, the little treatise of *Boccaccio*, Filippo Villani's quite unimportant work at the end of the fourteenth century, and the far more reliable life by *Leonardo Bruni* in the *fifteenth century*. In addition we have a few scanty hints given by the early commentators on the *Divina Commedia*, and a very few documents. It is obviously next to impossible to distinguish between what is literal fact, and what is either allegory or poetical embellishment in Dante's account of himself; and, indeed, the traditional biography of Dante is a tangled web of mingled truth and fiction which can hardly be unravelled. For this, Boccaccio's gossip and rhetoric are less responsible

than the baseless conjectures and dogmatic assertions of Carlo Troya in the present century. The more salutary, if less attractive, tendency of contemporary Dante criticism is to question everything, however tempting, which is not supported by definite evidence.

**Beatrice.**—Although Leonardo Bruni rebukes Boccaccio, 'our Boccaccio that most sweet and pleasant man,' for having lingered so long over Dante's love affairs, still the story of Dante's first love remains the one salient feature of his youth and early manhood. We may surmise from the *Vita Nuova* that at the end of his eighteenth year, presumably in May 1283, Dante became enamoured of the glorious lady of his mind, Beatrice, who had first appeared to him as a child in her ninth year, nine years before. It is not quite certain whether Beatrice was her real name or one beneath which Dante conceals her identity; assuredly she was 'Beatrice,' the giver of blessing, to him and through him to all lovers of the noblest and fairest things in literature. Tradition, following Boccaccio, has identified her with Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, a wealthy Florentine who founded the hospital of S. Maria Nuova, and died in 1289 (cf. *V. N.* 22). Folco's daughter is shown by her father's will to have been the wife of Simone dei Bardi, a rich and noble banker. This has been confirmed by the recent discovery that, while the printed commentary of Dante's son Pietro upon the *Divine Comedy* hardly suggests that Beatrice was a real woman at all, several mss. of what may possibly be a recension by Pietro of his own work contain a distinct statement that the lady raised to fame in Dante's poem was in very fact Beatrice Portinari. Nevertheless, there are still found critics who see in Beatrice not a real woman, but a mystically exalted ideal of womanhood; while Dr. Scartazzini seems to hold (or at least did so in the second edition of his *Dantologia*, 1894) that the woman Dante loved was an unknown Florentine maiden, who would have been his wife but for her untimely death. This can hardly be deduced

from the *Vita Nuova*; in its noblest passages the woman of Dante's worship is scarcely regarded as an object that can be possessed; death has not robbed him of an expected beatitude, but all the world of an earthly miracle. But although it was in the fullest correspondence with mediæval ideals and fashions that chivalrous love and devotion should be directed by preference to a married woman, there is clearly discernible in the *Vita Nuova* a spiritual crisis, when Dante crushes the earthly element out of his love and resolves to seek his beatitude in the words that praise his lady, possibly when events showed that any more natural beatitude was unattainable.

**Poetry, Friendship, Study.**—Already at the age of eighteen Dante was a poet: 'I had already seen for myself the art of saying words in rhyme' (*V. N.* 3). It was on the occasion of his *innamoramento* that he wrote the first of his sonnets that has been preserved to us, in which he demands an explanation of a dream from 'all the faithful of Love.' The new poet was at once recognised. Among the many answers came a sonnet from the most famous Italian lyricist then living, Guido Cavalcanti, henceforth to be the first of Dante's friends: 'And, indeed, it was when he learned that I was he who had sent those rhymes to him that our friendship commenced' (cf. *Inf.* x. 60). In this same year, 1283, Dante's name first occurs in a document concerning some business transactions as his late father's heir.

There are no external events recorded in Dante's life between 1283 and 1289. Boccaccio represents him as devoted to study. He certainly owed much to the paternal advice of the secretary of the Republic, the philosopher Brunetto Latini: 'For in my memory is fixed, and now goes to my heart, the dear, kind, paternal image of you, when in the world, hour by hour, you taught me how man makes himself eternal' (*Inf.* xv. 82). Of his growing maturity in art, the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova* bear witness; the prose narrative shows that he had studied the Latin



(poets as well as the new singers of Provence and Italy, had already dipped into scholastic philosophy, and was not unacquainted with Aristotle. At the same time, Leonardo Bruni was obviously right in describing Dante as not severing himself from the world, but excelling in every youthful exercise; and it would seem from the *Vita Nuova* that, in spite of his supreme devotion for Beatrice, there were other Florentine damsels who moved his heart for a time. Dante speaks of 'a friend whom I counted as second unto me in the degrees of friendship,' and who was united by very near kinship to Beatrice (*V. N.* 33). Those who identify Dante's Beatrice with the daughter of Messer Folco suppose that this second friend was one of her three brothers, probably Manetto Portinari, to whom a sonnet of Guido's may have been addressed. Casella the musician, and Lapo Gianni the poet, are mentioned with affection in the *Purgatorio* (Canto ii.), and in one of Dante's sonnets (xxxii.) respectively. Cino da Pistoia, like Cavalcanti, seems to have answered Dante's dream; their friendship was perhaps at present mainly confined to exchanging poems. Boccaccio and Benvenuto da Imola speak of an early visit of Dante's to the universities of Bologna and Padua, which is scarcely probable at this epoch of his life. He may possibly have served in some cavalry expedition to check the harrying parties of Aretines in 1288; for, when war broke out in Tuscany in his twenty-fifth year, it found Dante 'no novice in arms,' as a fragment of one of his lost letters puts it, *non fanciullo nell' armi*.

**Popular Government.**—Twenty years had now passed since the victory of Colle di Val d'Elsa in 1269. Great changes had taken place in the meanwhile. Popes Gregory x and Nicholas iii had attempted to restore some of the exiled Ghibellines to Florence, and to reconcile the Guelf magnates among themselves. Cardinal Latino de' Frangipani in 1280 had established a peace by which some Ghibellines were allowed a share in the administration, the twelve Ancients being replaced by



fourteen 'good men,' eight Guelfs and six Ghibellines. But the city remained strenuously Guelf. Nicholas III had deprived King Charles of the offices of Senator of Rome and Vicar Imperial, had allowed Rudolph of Hapsburg to establish a vicar in Tuscany, and possibly prepared the way for the Sicilian Vespers (*Inf.* xix. 99, *Par.* viii. 73). In 1282 the Sicilians rose, massacred Charles's adherents, and received as their king Peter of Aragon, the husband of Manfredi's daughter Constance (*Purg.* iii. 143). The hitherto united kingdom of Naples and Sicily, which had been the heritage of the imperial Suabians from the Norman heroes of the house of Hauteville, was thus divided between a French and a Spanish line of kings (*Par.* xx. 63). In the same year a peaceful revolution took place in Florence. Instead of the Fourteen, the government was put into the hands of the Priors of the Arts or Guilds, who, associated with the Captain, were henceforth recognised as the chief magistrates of the Republic, composing the Signoria, during the two months for which they were elected to hold office. Their number, after the first, was normally six; both *grandi* and *popolani* were at first eligible, provided the former left their order by enrolling themselves in one of the Guilds. A thorough organisation of these Guilds, the *Arti maggiori* and *Arti minori*, secured the administration in the hands of the trading classes. But, while the central government of the Republic was thus entirely popular, the magnates still retained control over the captains of the Guelf Society, with their two councils, and exerted considerable influence upon the Podestà, always one of their own order and an alien, in whose councils they still sat.

**Battle of Campaldino.**—A period of prosperity and victory followed for Florence. The crushing defeat inflicted upon Pisa by Genoa at the great naval battle of Meloria in 1284 was much to her advantage; as was also, perhaps, the decline of the Angevin power after the victory of Peter of Aragon's fleet (*Purg.* xx. 79). Charles II,

the 'cripple of Jerusalem,' who succeeded his father as king of Naples, was a less formidable suzerain. On June 89 11th, 1289, the Tuscan Ghibellines were utterly defeated by the Florentines and their allies at the battle of Campaldino. According to Leonardo Bruni—and there seems no adequate reason for rejecting his testimony—Dante was present, 'fighting valiantly on horseback in the front rank,' apparently among the 150 who volunteered for the front as *feditori*, amongst whom was Vieri de' Cerchi, who was later to acquire more dubious reputation in politics. Bruni states that in a letter Dante draws a plan of the fight; and he quotes what seems to be a fragment of another letter, written later, where Dante speaks of 'the battle of Campaldino, in which the Ghibelline party was almost utterly destroyed and undone; where I found myself, no novice in arms, and where I had much fear, and in the end very great gladness, by reason of the varying chances of that battle.'

Dante probably took part in the subsequent events of the campaign; the wasting of the Aretine territory, the unsuccessful attack upon Arezzo, the surrender of the Pisan fortress of Caprona. 'Thus once I saw the footmen, who marched out under treaty from Caprona, fear at seeing themselves among so many enemies' (*Inf.* xxi. 94-96). There appears to be a direct reference to his personal experiences of the campaign in the opening of *Inferno* xxii.: 'I have seen ere now horsemen moving camp and commencing the assault, and holding their muster, and at times retiring to escape: coursers have I seen upon your land, O Aretines! and seen the march of foragers, the shock of tournaments and race of jousts, now with trumpets and now with bells, with drums and castle signals.' He has sung of Campaldino in peculiarly pathetic strains in Canto v. of the *Purgatorio*. On the lower slopes of the Mountain of Purgation wanders the soul of Buonconte da Montefeltro, who led the Aretine cavalry, and whose body was never found; mortally wounded and forsaken by

all, he had died gasping out the name of Mary, and his Giovanna had forgotten even to pray for his soul.

**Death of Beatrice.**—After these triumphs, in spite of internal dissensions, there were great festivities in Florence. The month of May of the following year, 1290, was celebrated with more than usual gaiety. On the Feast of St. John more than a thousand persons, dressed in white, paraded the streets, guided by the 'Lord of Love.' But on June 9th, or June 19th, according to the reading adopted of a passage in the *Vita Nuova* (*V. N.* 30), Beatrice died; and Dante lifts up his voice with the Prophet: 'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow. she that was great among the nations.'

### 3. *After the Death of Beatrice*

**Philosophic Refuge.**—It is not easy to get a very definite idea of Dante's private life during the next ten years. With the completion of the *Vita Nuova*, shortly after Beatrice's death, an epoch closes in his life, as in his work. From the *Convivio* it would appear that in his sorrow Dante took refuge in the study of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius and Cicero's *De Amicitia*; that he frequented 'the schools of the religious and the disputations of philosophers,' where he became deeply enamoured of Philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Cino da Pistoia addressed to him an exceedingly beautiful canzone, consoling him for the loss of Beatrice, bidding him take comfort in the contemplation of her glory among the saints and Angels of Paradise, where she is praying to God for her lover's peace. This poem is quoted years later by Dante himself

<sup>1</sup> This passage, *Conv.* ii. 13, about the religious orders, together with the casting away of the cord, *Inf.* xvi. 106, perhaps started the legend that Dante once intended to become a Franciscan.

in the second book of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (ii. 6), where he couples it with his own canzone—

‘Amor che nella mente mi ragiona,’

‘Love that in my mind discourses to me,’ with which Casella consoles the penitent spirits upon the shore of Purgatory: ‘The amorous chant which was wont to quiet all my desires.’

**Aberrations.**—It would seem, however, that neither the memory of Beatrice nor his philosophical devotion kept Dante from falling into what he afterwards came to regard as a morally unworthy life. *Tanto giù cadde*, ‘so low he fell’ (*Purg.* xxx. 136). It is almost impossible to hold, as Witte and Scartazzini would have us do, that the poignant reproaches, which Beatrice addresses to Dante when he meets her on Lethe’s banks, are connected merely with intellectual errors, with culpable neglect of Theology or speculative wanderings from revealed truth, for there is no trace of anything of the kind in any of Dante’s writings at any period of his career. The dark wood in which he wandered, led by the world and the flesh, was that of sensual passion and moral aberration for a while from the light of reason and the beauty of righteousness.

**Friendship with Forese Donati.**—About this time Dante seems to have become intimate with the great Donati family, whose houses were in the same district of the city. Corso di Simone Donati, a turbulent and ambitious spirit, had done heroically at Campaldino, and was now intent upon having his own way in the state. A close and familiar friendship united Dante with Corso’s brother Forese, a sensual man of pleasure. Six sonnets interchanged between these two friends, though almost certainly authentic, do little credit to either. ‘If thou recall to mind,’ Dante says to Forese in the sixth terrace of Purgatory, ‘what thou wast with me and I was with thee, the present memory will still be grievous’ (*Purg.* xxiii. 115). Whether from this friendship with Forese or some



other cause, there seems to have arisen a misunderstanding between Dante and Guido Cavalcanti, to whom he had dedicated his first book (*V. N.* 31). In a famous sonnet Guido rebukes Dante for his altered mode of life, *la vil tua vita*; and Guido, the sceptical member of Dante's circle, would probably have regarded unauthorised speculation or neglect of Theology as highly praiseworthy. Forese died in July 1296; the author of the *Ottimo Commento*, who wrote circa 1334, and professes to have known the divine poet, tells us that Dante induced Forese when on his death-bed to repent and receive the last sacraments.

**Loves, Marriage, and Debts.**—Several very striking love poems, written for a lady whom Dante represents under various stony images, and whose name may possibly have been Pietra, are frequently assigned to this period of Dante's life, but may possibly have been written in the early days of his exile. From other lyrics and sonnets we dimly discern that several women may have crossed Dante's life now and later, of whom nothing can be known. Some time before 1297 Dante married Gemma di Manetto Donati, a distant kinswoman of Corso and Forese. In the *Paradiso*, xvi. 119, Dante refers with complacency to his wife's ancestor, Ubertino Donati, Manetto's great-grandfather, whose family pride scorned any alliance with the Adimari. The marriage is generally believed to have been an unhappy one, but there seem no adequate grounds for the very hard things that many students of Dante have said against his wife. It is however certain that, although Gemma bore Dante four children, Jacopo, Pietro, Antonia, and Beatrice, she did not share his exile, and was still living in 1332. During these years, between 1293 and 1300, Dante was contracting debts which altogether amounted to a very large sum, but which were cleared off from the poet's estate after his death.

#### 4. *Dante's political life*

**Election of Boniface VIII.**—Upon the abdication of Celestine v, Cardinal Benedetto Gaietani was made Pope on Christmas Eve 1294, under the title of Boniface viii (*Inf.* xix. 52-57), an event ominous for Florence and for Dante. Although canonised by the Church, there is little doubt that St. Celestine is the first soul met by Dante in the vestibule of Hell: *Colui che fece per viltà lo gran rifiuto* (*Inf.* iii. 58-63), 'He who made from cowardice the great renunciation.'

**Giano della Bella.**—Florence had just confirmed the democratic character of her constitution by the reforms of Giano della Bella, a noble who had identified himself with the popular cause (*Par.* xvi. 132). By the Ordinances of Justice in 1293 stringent provisions were enacted against the nobles, who since Campaldino had grown peculiarly aggressive towards the people and factious against each other. They were henceforth more rigorously excluded from the Priorate; severe penalties were exacted for offences against *popolani*; and, in order that these ordinances should be carried out, a new magistrate, the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia or Standard-bearer of Justice, was added to the Signoria to hold office like the Priors for two months in rotation from the different districts of the city. The third of these standard-bearers was Dino Compagni, who is generally believed to be really the author of the Chronicle that bears his name. Giano della Bella was meditating the completion of his work by depriving the captains of the Guelph Society of their power and resources, when a riot, in which Corso Donati played a prominent part, caused his overthrow in March 1295. By his fall the government remained in the hands of the rich burghers.

295 **First Steps in Political Life.**—In this same year 1295, the first year of the pontificate of Boniface viii, Dante Alighieri entered political life. On July 6th he spoke in the General Council of the Commune, in support of modifica-

tions in the Ordinances. On December 14th he voted in the Council of the Consuls of the Arts, having already ascribed himself to the Art of Physicians and Apothecaries. On January 23rd, 1296, the Pope inaugurated his aggressive policy towards the Republic, by addressing a bull to the Podestà, Captain, Ancients, Priors and Rectors of the Arts, to the Council and the Commune of Florence (purposely ignoring the new office of Gonfaloniere). After denouncing in unmeasured terms the wickedness of that 'rock of scandal,' Giano della Bella, and extolling the prudence of the Florentines in expelling him, the Pope, hearing that certain persons are striving to obtain his recall, utterly forbids anything of the kind without special licence from the Holy See, under penalty of excommunication and interdict. The Pope further protests his great and special affection for Florence, amongst the cities devoted to God and the Apostolic See. 'I love France so well,' says Shakespeare's King Henry, 'that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine.'

Although Boccaccio, and others in his steps, have very greatly exaggerated Dante's influence in the politics of the Republic, there can be no doubt that from the outset he took a decided attitude in direct opposition to all lawlessness, and in resistance to any external interference in Florentine matters, whether from Rome, Naples, or France. The eldest son of Charles II, Carlo Martello, whom Dante had 'loved much and with good cause' (*Par.* viii. 55) during his visit to Florence in the spring of 1295, had died soon after; and his father was harassing the Florentines for money to carry on the Sicilian war. Dante gave his opinion in the Council of the Hundred on June 5th, 1296. On May 7th, 1300 (not 1299, as hitherto supposed), he acted as ambassador to San Gimignano to announce that a parliament was to be held for the purpose of electing a captain for the Guelph League of Tuscany, and to invite the Commune to send representatives. But already the storm



cloud which loomed on the horizon had burst upon the Republic on May Day 1300.

X **Blacks and Whites.**—The new division which was to devastate Florence originated in the feud between two noble families, the Donati and the Cerchi, headed respectively by two of the heroes of Campaldino, Corso Donati and Vieri de' Cerchi. The former, the more aristocratic faction, hated by the burghers and admired by the populace, were all powerful in the councils of the Guelf Society. The latter, more wealthy, and of originally low origin, were influential among the Florentine merchants and opposed to violent or daring measures. As far as either party can be said to have had political motives, the Cerchi and their allies represented in a modified form the party of Giano della Bella and the Ordinances of Justice, and therefore drew closer to the Priors and the constitutional government of the Commune, but wished to make the administration less exclusive. Guido Cavalcanti and the more moderate spirits adhered to the Cerchi; while Corso Donati, who was Guido's personal foe, was high in favour with the Pope. The names Neri and Bianchi, Black Guelfs and White Guelfs, by which the two factions became known, seem to have been derived from a similar division in Pistoia, the ringleaders of which, being banished to Florence (from which Pistoia was governed), found this greater quarrel in progress. Florence was now indeed 'disposed for woful ruin' (*Purg.* xxiv. 81), but there was still a 'long contention' (*Inf.* vi. 64) before they came to bloodshed.

**The Jubilee.**—On Christmas Day 1299 commenced the Jubilee of Pope Boniface, the first of the series of papal jubilees. It lasted through the year 1300. Amongst the throngs of pilgrims from all parts of the world to Rome were Giovanni Villani and, probably, Dante (*Inf.* xviii. 28). This visit to Rome inspired Villani to undertake his great Chronicle; and it is the epoch by poetical fiction of the vision which is the subject of the *Divina Commedia* (*Purg.* ii. 98). The Pope, however, had his eyes on Florence,



and had apparently resolved to make Tuscany a part of the Papal States. Possibly he had already opened negotiations with the Neri through his agents and bankers, the Spini. A plot against the state on the part of three Florentines in the service of the Pope was discovered to the Signoria, and sentence passed against the offenders on April 18th. Boniface wrote to the Bishop of Florence, on April 24th, 1300, demanding from the Commune that the sentences should be annulled and the accusers sent to him. The Priors having refused compliance and denied his jurisdiction in the matter, the Pope issued a second bull, declaring that he had no intention of derogating from the jurisdiction or liberty of Florence, which he intended to increase; but asserting the absolute supremacy of the Roman Pontiff both in spiritual and temporal things over all people and kingdoms, and demanding again, with threats of vengeance spiritual and temporal, that the sentences against his adherents should be annulled, and that the three accusers with six of the most violent against his authority should appear before him, and that the officers of the Republic should send representatives to answer for their conduct. This was on May 15th, but, two days earlier, the Pope had written to the Duke of Saxony, and sent the Bishop of Ancona to Germany, to demand from Albert of Austria the renunciation absolutely to the Holy See of all rights claimed by the Emperors in Tuscany.

**Dante's Priorate.**—But in the meantime bloodshed had taken place in Florence. On May 1st the two factions came to blows in the Piazza di Santa Trinità; and on May 4th full powers had been given to the Priors to defend the liberty of the Commune and People of Florence against dangers from within and without (which had evidently irritated the Pope). The whole city was now divided; magnates and burghers alike became bitter partisans of one or other faction. The Pope, who had previously made a vain attempt to reconcile Vieri de' Cerchi with the Donati, sent the Franciscan Cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta as legate and peacemaker to Florence, in the interests of the captains

of the Guelf Society and the Neri, who accused the Signoria of Ghibelline tendencies. The Cardinal arrived in June. From June 15th to August 15th Dante was one of the six Priors by election.<sup>1</sup> 'All my misfortunes,' he says in the letter quoted by Leonardo Bruni, 'had their cause and origin in the ill-omened meetings of my Priorate; of which Priorate, though by prudence I was not worthy, still by faith and age I was not unworthy.' Convinced that the legate's real object was to overthrow the government, Dante probably headed the Signoria in refusing his demands; upon which he went back to the Pope, leaving the city under an interdict. Disturbances continued. Four of the Bianchi, including Pigello, the third brother of Beatrice Portinari, were poisoned in prison. The Priors, perhaps on Dante's motion, exiled some prominent members of both factions, including Corso Donati and Guido Cavalcanti. The Neri attempted to resist, expecting aid from Lucca; the Bianchi obeyed, and were soon allowed to return on the plea of Cavalcanti's illness, just after Dante had left office. Guido died towards the end of August.

**Treachery of the Neri.**—It is not quite certain what was the immediate occasion of this banishment of the leaders. According to Compagni and most recent historians, it was an assault made by certain magnates upon the Consuls of the Arts on St. John's Eve, while Cardinal Matteo was still in the city. According to Villani (whose chronology is invalidated by the date of Guido's death) and Bruni, it was the discovery of a conspiracy, hatched at a meeting of the Neri in the Church of S. Trinità, after the Cardinal had departed, when it was decided to appeal to the Pope to send a French prince to Florence. But, from the vivid account given by Compagni, this meeting seems to have taken place later, perhaps in June 1301, when Corso Donati

<sup>1</sup> On June 15th the sentence against the Pope's three servants was formally consigned to Dante and his colleagues, and practically confirmed by them. The document is given in Del Lungo's *Dal Secolo e dal Poema di Dante*.

was in exile, and the partisans of the Neri, chafing at the domination of the rival faction, were eagerly looking out for foreign aid in recovering the state. Corso Donati had gone to the Pope, who, towards the close of 1300, had summoned Charles of Valois, brother of Philip the Fair, to aid Charles of Naples against Frederick of Aragon in Sicily and reduce the 'rebels' of Tuscany to submission. The Bianchi were all potent in Florence; and, in May 1301, procured the expulsion of the Neri from Pistoia, which was the beginning of the end (*Inf.* xxiv. 143): 'Pistoia first is thinned of Neri; then Florence renovates her people and her laws.'

**The Coming of Charles of Valois.**—On April 13th, 1301, Dante voted in the Council of the Consuls of the Arts. On April 28th he was appointed to superintend certain works in the Strada di San Procolo, with the object of more readily bringing up troops from the country to support the Signoria in case of need. On June 19th Dante, in the Council of the Hundred, opposed the grant of a subsidy to the King of Naples for the war in Sicily, and the service of a hundred soldiers for the Pope which the Cardinal Matteo had demanded by letter.<sup>1</sup> His vote in the Council of the Captain on September 28th was the last recorded time that *Dante Alagherii consuluit* in Florence. Already Charles of Valois was on his way, preparing to 'joust with the lance of Judas' (*Purg.* xx. 70-78); and Dante was marked out at Rome for special destruction (*Par.* xvii. 49). On November 1st, after giving solemn pledges to the Signoria (Dino Compagni being one of the Priors), Charles with 1200 horsemen entered Florence without opposition.

Leonardo Bruni asserts that Dante was absent at Rome on an embassy to the Pope, when his 'peacemaker' entered.

<sup>1</sup> *Nihil fiat* was Dante's answer to the latter demand. He voted also in the united Councils on September 13th, and in the Council of the Captain of the People on September 20th and September 28th.



Dino Compagni gives an account of the reception of this embassy; and, in another passage which may be a later interpolation, mentions that Dante was one of the three ambassadors—which is confirmed by the author of the *Ottimo Commento*. It would appear from Compagni that two of the ambassadors returned to Florence about the same time as Charles arrived, but that the third (apparently Dante) was detained by the Pope in Rome. But the whole matter must be regarded as very doubtful. Boccaccio states that the Bianchi proposed to send Dante on such an embassy, but does not tell us whether he ever went. Villani makes no mention of the embassy at all, and it is seriously questioned by many Dante scholars. If historical, it must have been sent at the end of September or early in October; and it has been thought that Boccaccio's account implies that, if Dante went, he had returned in time to share the fate of his associates. Cacciaguida's words to Dante are somewhat ambiguous: 'As Hippolytus departed from Athens, by reason of his pitiless and perfidious stepmother, so from Florence needs must thou depart. This is willed, this even now is being sought, and soon will it be done for him who thinks it, there where Christ is daily bought and sold' (*Par.* xvii. 46-51). Yielding to necessity and trusting to his solemn oath, the Signoria, in a parliament held in S. Maria Novella, gave Charles authority to pacify the city; which he set about doing by restoring the Neri to power. Corso Donati with his allies entered Florence in arms, to plunder and massacre at their pleasure. The Cerchi made no attempt to hold their own (cf. *Par.* xvi. 94-96). A second effort by the Cardinal Matteo from the Pope to reconcile the two factions was resisted by Charles and the Neri; and the work of proscription commenced. The new Podestà, Cante de' Gabbrielli da Gubbio, passed sentence after sentence against the ruined Bianchi. Finally, at the beginning of April, their chiefs were betrayed into a real or pretended conspiracy against Charles, and driven out with their followers and adherents, both nobles and burghers;



their houses were destroyed, and their goods confiscated, themselves sentenced as rebels. On April 4th, 1302, Charles left Florence, covered with disgrace and full of plunder, leaving the government entirely in the hands of the Neri. 'Having cast forth the greatest part of the flowers from thy bosom, O Florence,' writes Dante in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, 'Totila fruitlessly and late went to Sicily' (*V. E.* ii. 6).

**Sentences against Dante.**—The first sentence against Dante is dated January 27th, 1302, and includes four other names. Gherardino Diedati, formerly Prior, is accused of taking bribes for the return of an exile, and has not appeared when summoned. Palmiero Altoviti (who had taken the lead in putting down the conspiracy held in Santa Trinità), Dante Alighieri, Lippo Becchi (one of the denouncers of Boniface's agents in 1300), and Orlanduccio Orlandi, are accused of 'barratry,' fraud and corrupt practices, unlawful gains and extortions and the like, in office and out of office; of having resisted the Pope and Messer Carlo, opposed the pacific state of Florence and the Guelf Party, of having caused the expulsion of the Neri from Pistoia, and severed that city from Florence and the Church. Since they have contumaciously absented themselves, when summoned to appear before the Podestà's court, they are held to have confessed their guilt, and sentenced to pay a heavy fine and restore what they have extorted. If not paid in three days, all their goods shall be confiscated; even if they pay, they are exiled for two years and perpetually excluded as falsifiers and barrators, *tamquam falsarii et barattarii*, from holding any office or benefice under the Commune of Florence. On March 10th, a further sentence condemns these five with ten others to be burned to death, if any of them at any time shall come into the power of the Commune. In this latter sentence there is no mention of any political offence, but only of malversation and contumacy. None of Dante's six colleagues in the Signoria are included in either sentence; but in the latter appears the name of Lapo Saltarelli, who

had headed the opposition to Boniface in the spring of 1300, but who seems to have been a worthless creature (cf. *Par.* xv. 128).

There can be little doubt that, in spite of the wording of these two sentences, Dante's real offence was his opposition to the policy of Pope Boniface. In the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (i. 6) he declares that he is suffering exile unjustly because of his love for Florence. All his early biographers bear testimony to his absolute innocence of the charge of malversation and barratry; it has been left to modern commentators to question it. In the letter to a Florentine friend, Dante (if it is really his) speaks of his innocence manifest to all, *innocentia manifesta quibuslibet*, as though in direct answer to the *fama publica referente* of the Podestà's sentence. His likening himself to Hippolytus in *Par.* xvi. is a no less emphatic protestation of innocence (cf. *Inf.* xv. 64, 70-72). 'I hold my exile as an honour'—

‘L'esilio, che m'è dato, onor mi tegno,’

he says in his canzone of the ‘Three Ladies’ (*Canz.* xx.), where he does not altogether acquit himself of blame—presumably with reference to the want of prudence mentioned in the letter quoted by Bruni, or to his associating himself with the enemies of Florence in 1302. Had Dante completed the *Convivio*, he would probably have furnished us with a complete Apologia in the fourteenth Treatise, where he intended to comment upon this canzone and discuss Justice. ‘Justice,’ he says in *Conv.* i. 12, ‘is so lovable that, as the philosopher says in the fifth of the Ethics, even her enemies love her, such as thieves and robbers; and therefore we see that her contrary, which is injustice, is especially hated (such as treachery, ingratitude, falsehood, theft, rapine, deceit, and their like). For these are such inhuman sins that, to defend oneself from the infamy of these, it is conceded by long usance that a man may speak of himself and may declare that he is faithful and loyal.

Of this virtue I shall speak more fully in the fourteenth Treatise.'

### 5. *First Period of Exile*

'Since it was the pleasure of the citizens of the most beautiful and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom (in which I was born and nourished up to the summit of my life, and in which, with her goodwill, I desire with all my heart to rest my weary soul and to end the time given me), I have gone through almost all the parts to which this language extends, a pilgrim, almost a beggar, showing against my will the wound of fortune, which is wont unjustly to be oftentimes reputed to the wounded.'

In these words (*Conv.* i. 3), Dante sums up the earlier portion of his exile. There are few lines of poetry more noble in pathos, more dignified in reticence, than those which he has put into the mouth of Cacciaguida (*Par.* xvii. 55-60): 'Thou shalt leave everything beloved most dearly, and this is that arrow which the bow of exile first shoots. Thou shalt find how savours of salt another's bread, and how hard the ascending and descending by another's stairs.'

**Early Days of Exile.**—The terms of the first sentence against Dante seem to imply that, if in Florence, he had fled from the city before January 27th, 1302. We do not know where he went. Boccaccio, apparently from a misunderstanding of *Par.* xvii. 70, says Verona; it is more likely to have been Bologna or Siena, which latter city would explain Leonardo Bruni's account of Dante's first hearing particulars of his ruin there. The sentence against Messer Vieri de' Cerchi, with the other leaders, is dated April 5th in the terrible *Libro del Chiodo*, the black book of the Guelf Party. Arezzo, Forlì, Siena, Bologna, were the chief resorts of the exiled Bianchi; in the latter city they were especially welcome, *veduti volentieri*. Dante first

joined them in a meeting held at Gorgonza, where they are said by Bruni to have made the poet one of their twelve councillors, and to have fixed their headquarters at Arezzo. For a short time Dante made common cause with them, but found their society extremely uncongenial (*Par.* xvii. 61-66). On June 8th, 1302, there is documentary evidence of his presence with eight others in the choir of San Godenzo at the foot of the Apennines, where the Bianchi allied with the Ghibelline Ubaldini to make war upon Florence. The fact of this meeting having been held in Florentine territory and followed by several cavalry raids induced a fresh sentence in July from the new Podestà, Gherardino da Gambara of Brescia, in which, however, Dante is not mentioned.

**Failure of the Bianchi.**—A heavy blow was inflicted upon the exiles by the treachery of Carlino de' Pazzi (*Inf.* xxxii. 69), who surrendered the castle of Piantravigne in Valdarno to the Neri, when many Bianchi were slain or taken. The cruelty of the Romagnole, Count Fulcieri da Calvoli, the next Podestà of Florence from January to September 1303, towards such of the unfortunate Bianchi as fell into his hands, has received its meed of infamy in *Purg.* xiv. 61-66. Their renewed attempts to recover the state by force of arms, under the Ghibelline captain Scarpetta degli Ordelaifi of Forlì, resulted only in the disastrous defeat of Pulicciano in Mugello.

**Death of Boniface VIII.**—In this same year Sciarra Colonna and William de Nogaret, in the name of Philip the Fair, seized Boniface VIII at Anagni, and treated the old Pontiff with such barbarity that he died in a few days, October 11th, 1303. The seizure had been arranged by the infamous Musciatto Franzesi, who had been instrumental in the bringing of Charles of Valois to Florence. 'I see the golden lilies enter Alagna,' cries Hugh Capet in the *Purgatorio*; 'and in His vicar Christ made captive. I see Him a second time derided. I see renewed the vinegar and gall, and Him slain between living thieves' (*Purg.* xx.



86-90). Estranged from his fellow exiles, who for some unknown reason seem to have turned violently against him (*Par.* xvii. 61), Dante had learned by now that he must form a party to himself; and probably towards the end of this year, 1303, he found his first refuge at Verona in the courtesy of the great Lombard, Bartolommeo della Scala (*ibid.* 70-75), at whose court he now first saw his young brother, afterwards famous as Can Grande, and already in boyhood showing sparks of future greatness. 1303

**Benedict XI.**—In succession to Boniface, Nicholas of Treviso, the General of the Dominicans, a man of humble birth and of most saintly life, was made Pope on November 1st, 1303, as Benedict XI. He at once devoted himself to healing the wounds of Italy, and sent to Florence as peacemaker the Dominican Cardinal, Niccolò da Prato, who was of Ghibelline origin. The peacemaker arrived in March 1304, and was received with great honour. Some of the Bianchi, and even a few Ghibellines, were reconciled with the government; and, when May opened, there was an attempt to revive the traditional festivities which had ended on that fatal May Day of 1300. But a terrible disaster on the Ponte alla Carraia cast an ominous gloom over the city, and the Neri treacherously forced the Cardinal to leave. Hardly had he gone when, on June 10th, fighting broke out in the streets, and a fire, purposely started by the Neri, devastated Florence. On July 7th the Blessed Benedict died, probably poisoned, at Perugia; and, seeing this last hope taken from them, the irreconcilable portion of the Bianchi, led by Baschiera della Tosa, aided by the Ghibellines of Tuscany under Tolosato degli Uberti, with allies from Bologna and Arezzo, made a valiant attempt to surprise Florence on July 20th from Lastra. Baschiera, with about a thousand of the more daring, actually held the part of Florence round San Marco, with white standards displayed, and garlands of olives, with drawn swords, crying peace (*Vill.* viii. 72; *Comp.* iii.). Mainly through want of organisation and the slackness of their

allies, this splendid attempt ended in utter disaster, and with its failure the last hopes of the Bianchi were dashed to the ground.

Verona, Bologna, Padua, Lunigiana, and the Casentino.—After the defeat of Lastra, Bruni represents Dante as going from Arezzo to Verona, utterly humbled. It is more probable that he had broken away from the exiles before the short pontificate of Benedict XI; and that, after the death of Bartolommeo della Scala in March 1304, he left Verona and went now to the Studio at Bologna. The first book of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* seems in many respects to bear witness to this stay at Bologna, where the exiles were still welcome; a certain kindness towards the Bolognese, very different to his treatment of them later in the *Divina Commedia*, is apparent, together with a peculiar acquaintance with their dialect. But on March 1st, 1306, through Florentine intrigues, the Bolognese violently expelled all the Florentine exiles, and ordered that no Bianchi or Ghibellines should be found in Bolognese territory on pain of death. Dante probably went to Padua from Bologna, as there is documentary proof of his residence in Padua on August 27th, 1306. It is pleasant to believe that he may have met Giotto when the painter was engaged upon the frescoes of the Madonna dell' Arena. In October, Dante was in Lunigiana, a guest of the Malaspina, that honoured race adorned with the glory of purse and sword (*Purg.* viii. 121-139). Here, according to Boccaccio, he recovered from Florence some manuscript which he had left behind him in his flight; possibly what he afterwards rewrote as the first seven cantos of the *Inferno*, though this seems doubtful. On October 6th he acted as ambassador and *nuncio* of the Marquis Franceschino Malaspina in establishing peace between his house and the Bishop of Luni. This is the last certain trace of Dante's feet in Italy for nearly five years. He may possibly have been in the mountains near Urbino, at Forlì, in the Casentino, and elsewhere. There is a strangely beautiful canzone of his which seems written

from the Casentino in Valdarno, and most probably at this time (Canz. xi). Love has seized upon the poet in the midst of the Alps (*i.e.* Apennines): 'In the valley of the river by whose side thou hast ever power upon me'; 'Thou goest, my mountain song; perchance shalt see Florence, my city, that bars me out of herself, void of love and nude of pity; if thou dost enter in, go tell them: Now my maker can no more make war upon you; there, whence I come, such a chain binds him that, even if your cruelty relax, he has no more liberty to return.'

Dante probably had, as Bruni tells us, been abstaining from any hostile action towards Florence, and hoping to be recalled by the government spontaneously, or at least pardoned. There may probably be an echo of this humbled state of mind in the passage from the canzone of the 'Three Ladies,' where he practically acknowledges some shadow of guilt on his part. It was probably after having written in vain the letter mentioned by Bruni, but now lost, *Popule mi quid feci tibi*, that Dante decided to leave Italy. Most likely between 1307 and 1309, probably by way of <sup>1309</sup> the Riviera and Provence, Dante went to Paris.

**Clement V—Death of Corso Donati.**—In the meantime Clement v, a Gascon, and formerly Archbishop of Bordeaux, had been elected Pope. 'From westward there shall come a lawless shepherd of uglier deeds' than even Boniface viii, writes Dante in *Inferno* xix. He translated the Papal Court from Rome to Avignon, and thus in 1305 <sup>1305</sup> commenced the Babylonian captivity of the Popes, which lasted for more than seventy years, 'to the great damage of all Christendom, but especially of Rome' (Platina). Scandalous as was his subservience to the French king, and utterly unworthy of the Papacy as he showed himself, it must be admitted that Clement made serious efforts to relieve the persecuted Bianchi and Ghibellines—efforts which were cut short by the surrender of Pistoia in 1306 and the incompetence of his legate, the Cardinal Napoleone degli Orsini. In October 1308, Corso Donati came to the



violent end mentioned as a prophecy in *Purg.* xxiv.; suspected, with good reason, at aiming at the lordship of Florence with the aid of the Ghibelline captain, Uguccione della Faggiuola, whose daughter he had married, he was denounced as a traitor and killed in his flight from the city.

**Dante probably at Paris.**—Villani tells us that Dante, after exile, went to the Studio at Bologna, and then to Paris and to many parts of the world. The only non-Italian part of the world that seems possible, though highly improbable, is Oxford, based upon an ambiguous line in a poetical epistle from Boccaccio to Petrarch and the later testimony of Giovanni da Serravalle at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Even Dante's stay in Paris has been questioned of late, but on hardly adequate grounds. The University of Paris was then the first in the world in theology and scholastic philosophy. Boccaccio tells us that the disputations which Dante sustained there were regarded as most marvellous triumphs of scholastic subtlety. According to Giovanni da Serravalle (who has, however, placed Dante's Parisian experiences too early) Dante was forced to return before taking the doctorate of Theology, for which he had already kept the necessary acts. He probably stayed in Paris until the close of 1310, when tremendous events put an end to his studies and imperatively summoned him back to Italy.

### 6. *The Invasion of Henry VII.*

'Lo, now is the acceptable time wherein arise the signs of consolation and peace. For a new day beginneth to glow, showing forth the dawn which even now maketh less thick the darkness of our long calamity; and already the breezes of the east begin to blow, the lips of heaven glow red, and confirm the auspices of the nations with a gentle calm. And we too shall see the looked-for joy, we who have kept vigil through the long night in the desert' (*Epist.* v. 1).



**Election of Henry VII.**—On May 1st, 1308, Albert of Austria, who, by his neglect of Italy, had suffered the garden of the Empire to be desert, was assassinated by his nephew (*Purg.* vi. 97-105). In November, with the concurrence of the Pope and in opposition to the royal house of France, Henry of Luxemburg was elected Emperor. In January 1309 he was crowned at Aix as Henry VII, and prepared to descend into Italy as true King of the Romans and successor of Cæsar, such as the Italians had not recognised since the death of Frederick II (*Conv.* iv. 3). The saddle was no longer empty; Italy had once more a king and Rome a spouse. It is in the glory of this imperial sunrise that Dante appears again, and, in the letter just quoted to the Princes and Peoples of Italy, his voice is heard, hailing the advent of this new Moses, this most clement Henry, *divus Augustus Cæsar*, who is hastening to the nuptials, illuminated in the rays of the Apostolic benediction. Dante asserts in the most uncompromising tone the absolute authority of the Emperor, and calls upon the Italians to submit. The letter (if genuine) seems to have been written before September 1310, when the Emperor arrived in Italy. In January 1311 he took the iron crown at Milan. Dante, sometime before the end of March, had paid his homage to the Emperor (*Epist.* vii. 2): ‘I saw thee as beseems Imperial Majesty most benignant and heard thee most clement, when that my hands handled thy feet and my lips paid their debt. Then did my spirit exult in thee, and I spoke silently with myself: ‘Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who hath taken away the sins of the world.’

**National Policy of Florence.**—The Emperor himself shared the golden dream of the Italian idealists, and, believing in the possibility of the union of Church and Empire in a peaceful Italy healed of her wounds, addressed himself ardently to his impossible task, forcing cities to take back their exiles, patching up old quarrels. Opposed to him arises the less sympathetic figure of King Robert of Naples,

who, having succeeded his father, Charles II, in May 1309, headed the Guelf opposition. While others temporised, Florence openly defied the Emperor, insulted his envoys, and refused to send ambassadors to his coronation. While the Emperor put his imperial vicars into Italian cities, as though he were another Frederick Barbarossa, the Florentines drew closer their alliance with Robert, formed a confederation of Guelf cities, and aided with money and men all who made head against the German King. In spite of the bitter language used by Dante in his letters, modern historians have naturally recognised in this one of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Republic. 'Florence,' writes Pasquale Villari, 'called on the Guelf cities, and all seeking to preserve freedom and escape foreign tyranny, to join in an Italian confederation, with herself at its head. It was therefore at this moment that the small merchant republic initiated a truly national policy, and became a great power in Italy. So, in the mediæval shape of a feudal and universal Empire, on the one hand, and in that of a municipal confederation on the other, a gleam of the national idea first began to appear, though still in the far distance and veiled in clouds.'

**Letters and fresh Sentence.**—On March 31st, 1311, from 'the boundaries of Tuscany under the source of the Arno,' and on April 16th 'from Tuscany under the source of the Arno,' Dante addressed two terrible letters to 'the most wicked Florentines within,' and to 'the most sacred triumphant and only lord, Henry by divine providence King of the Romans, ever Augustus.' In the former he reasserts the rights and sanctity of the Empire, and, whilst hurling the fiercest invective upon the Florentine government, foretells their utter destruction and warns them of their inability to withstand the might of the Emperor. In the latter he rebukes the 'minister of God and son of the Church and promoter of Roman glory,' for his delay in Lombardy, and urges him on against Florence, 'the sick sheep that infects all the flock of the Lord with her

contagion.' Let him lay her low and Israel will be delivered. 'Then shall our heritage, the taking away of which we weep without ceasing, be restored to us again. And even as we now groan, remembering the holy Jerusalem, exiles in Babylon, so then citizens, breathing again in peace, we shall look back in our joy upon the miseries of our confusion.' These letters were apparently written from the Casentino, where Dante was staying probably with one or other branch of the Conti Guidi. Absolutely nothing is known of his movements at this time, but there is a curious tradition of his having been temporarily imprisoned, perhaps by the Count of Porciano. Probably in consequence of these letters, a new condemnation was pronounced against him; on September 2nd, 1311, Dante is included in the long list of exiles who, in the 'reform' of Baldo d'Aguglione, are to be excepted from amnesty and for ever excluded from Florence.

**Failure of the Emperor.**—But in the meantime Brescia, 'the lioness of Italy,' who had offered as heroic a resistance to Henry VII as she was to do five centuries later to the Austrians of Haynau, had been forced to surrender; and the Emperor had at last moved southwards to Genoa and thence to Pisa, from which parties of imperialists ravaged the Florentine territory. Rome itself was partly held by the troops of King Robert and the Florentines; with difficulty was Henry crowned by the Pope's legates in the Church of St. John Lateran on June 29th, 1312. The Pope himself deserted the imperial cause and supported the Neapolitan king (*Par.* xvii. 82, xxx. 144). From September 19th to October 31st Henry besieged Florence, himself ill with fever. 'Do ye trust in any defence girt by your contemptible vallum?' Dante had written to the Florentines: 'What shall it avail to have girt you with a vallum and to have fortified you with outworks and battlements, when, terrible in gold, that eagle shall swoop down on you who, soaring, now over the Pyrenees, now over Caucasus, now over Atlas, ever strengthened by the



breathing of the soldiery of heaven, looked down of old upon vast oceans in his flight?' But the golden eagle did not venture upon an assault. Wasting the country as it went, the imperial army retreated. In the following year the Florentines gave the signory of their city to King Robert for five years; and the Emperor, moving from Pisa with reinforcements from Germany and Sicily, died on the march towards Naples at Buonconvento near Siena on August 24th, 1313. Dante had not accompanied the imperialists against Florence; he yet retained so much reverence for his fatherland, as Bruni writes, apparently from some lost letter of Dante's. We do not know where he was when the fatal news reached him. Cino da Pistoia and Sennuccio del Bene broke out into elegiac canzoni on the dead hero: Dante was silent, and waited till he could more worthily write the apotheosis of his *alto Arrigo* in the Empyrean (*Par.* xxx. 133-138).

### 7. *Last Period of Exile*

**Dante's Wanderings—Death of Clement V.**—Dante was again a proscribed fugitive. His movements are hardly known, excepting by more or less happy conjecture, from the spring of 1311 in the Casentino to the close of his days at Ravenna. Boccaccio and Bruni agree that he had now given up all hope of return to Florence. According to the latter, he wandered about in great poverty, under the protection of various lords, in different parts of Lombardy, Tuscany, and Romagna. There is a tradition, perhaps mainly based upon a passage in the *Paradiso* (*Par.* xxi. 106-120), that Dante retired to the Convent of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana in the Apennines, from which he gazed forth upon the perishing world of the Middle Ages, which was finding imperishable monument in his work. It is probably to this epoch of his life that we should assign the moral conversion which, by his poetical fiction, he represents as taking place in the year of the Jubilee, 1300.



But, if his steps are hidden, his voice is heard, and with no uncertain sound. On April 20th, 1314, Clement v died in Provence (*Par.* xxx. 145); and, early in the interregnum that followed, Dante addressed a famous letter to the Italian cardinals, rebuking them for their backsliding and corruption, urging them to make amendment by electing an Italian Pope to restore the papacy to Rome. It is a noble production, full of zeal and dignity, impregnated with the sublimest spirit of mediæval Catholicity. It had no immediate effect; after a long interval the Caorsine, John xxii, was elected in August 1316; and the disgrace of Avignon continued. The ideal Emperor had failed; no ideal Pope was forthcoming; conscious at last of his own greatness, with *luci chiare ed acute* (*Par.* xxii. 126), eyes clear from passion and acute with discernment, the divine poet turned to the completion of his *Commedia*.

**Lucca and new Condemnation.**—We know from the *Purgatorio* that Dante at some time visited Lucca, where a lady, said to have been Gentucca Morla, made the city pleasant to him. Dante's words seem to imply nothing more than an agreeable friendship (*Purg.* xxiv. 43-45). This sojourn at Lucca probably was during the sway of the Ghibelline captain, Uguccione della Faggiuola, between June 14th, 1314, and April 10th, 1316. Dante's two sons, Jacopo and Pietro, possibly joined him in Lucca. On August 29th, 1315, Uguccione utterly defeated the united armies of Florence and Naples at the great battle of Montecatini; the Pisan plowman had crushed the flowers and the lilies, as Giovanni del Virgilio wrote to Dante. On November 6th, Ranieri di Zaccaria of Orvieto, Robert's vicar in Florence (the king's vicars having replaced the Podestas), renewed the sentence of death against Dante, who, with his sons, is included with the Portinari and Giuochi as Ghibellines and rebels: Manetto Portinari is excepted by name from this decree, as having given security to the government.

**Amnesty rejected.**—But in the next year Uguccione

lost Pisa and Lucca, and fled to Verona, where Can Grande della Scala, since the death of his brother Albuino in 1311, held sovereign sway, and had become the champion of Lombard Ghibellinism; in 1318 Can was elected captain of the Ghibelline league, and in his service Ugucione was to fall before the walls of Padua in 1320. The Florentines, towards the close of 1316, allowed many of their exiles to return on condition of paying a fine and doing the public penance of being offered to St. John. According to Boccaccio this grace was offered to Dante; he was, however, certainly excluded from it by a Provision of June 2, 1316. The famous letter, to a Florentine friend, if it is really authentic, contains the rejection of this amnesty. While deeply and affectionately grateful to the friends who have striven for his return, Dante, with great dignity and calmness, refuses to accept it on such infamous conditions. There is no mention of the added condition of imprisonment to which Boccaccio makes reference:—‘Not this the way of return to my country, O Father; but if another may hereafter be found by you or any other, which hurts not Dante’s fair fame and honour, that will I accept with no lagging feet. If no such path leads back to Florence, then will I never enter Florence more. What then? May I not gaze upon the mirror of the sun and stars wherever I may be? Can I not ponder on the sweetest truths wherever I may be beneath the heaven, but I must first make me inglorious and shameful before the people and the state of Florence? Nor shall I lack for bread.’

**Dante at Verona.**—Of Dante’s supposed sojournings at Gubbio, Genoa, Pisa, Udine, and other places, there is nothing really known. It is, however, highly probable that, towards the close of 1316, his wandering feet led him back to Verona to renew his friendship with Can Grande (*Par.* xvii. 85-90; *Epist.* x. 1). The old legend of Dante’s having met with discourtesy at his hands is to be absolutely rejected, as indeed every reference

to Can Grande in Dante's works demands. That, on his earlier visit, there may have been some unpleasantness with Albuino (*Conv.* iv. 16), after the death of the great Bartolommeo, is more credible. But Dante needed a more peaceful refuge than Verona to complete his life's work; the city of the imperial vicar resounded with the clash of warlike preparations:—

‘But at this court, peace still must wrench  
Her chaplet from the teeth of war :  
By day they held high watch afar,  
At night they cried across the trench ;  
And still, in Dante's path, the fierce  
Gaunt soldiers wrangled o'er their spears.’

**At Ravenna.**—It was almost certainly in 1317 that Dante finally settled at Ravenna; probably, as Boccaccio tells us, on the invitation of Guido Novello da Polenta, who had succeeded to the lordship of Ravenna in June 1316. This Guido was the nephew of Francesca da Rimini, the hapless heroine of one of the most familiar episodes of the *Inferno*. These few remaining years of Dante's life are the pleasantest to contemplate. His two sons and his daughter, Beatrice, were with him, though their mother remained in Florence. Dino Perini, a younger Florentine, seems to have been to some extent the friend of Dante's later days, as Guido Cavalcanti had been of his youth. And there were other congenial companions round him. Scholars and disciples came to be instructed in the poetic art, among them Guido da Polenta himself and the Archbishop of Ravenna. Bologna offered him the laurel crown, and his relations were still cordial with Can Grande, to whom in 1318 he probably addressed a splendid Epistle. It is just possible, perhaps, that, at the end of 1319 or beginning of 1320, Dante paid a visit to Mantua, and that at Verona, on January 20th, 1320, he delivered a discourse concerning the relative position of the two elements, earth and water, on the globe's surface; but the only evidence for this is

the treatise *De Aqua et Terra*, ascribed to Dante, but now usually regarded as spurious.

**Last Days and Death.**—At Ravenna, amidst the monuments of ancient Cæsars and the records in mosaic of primitive Christianity, where the church walls testified the glory of Justinian and the music of the Pine Forest sounded in his ears, Dante finished his *Divina Commedia*. His poetical correspondence with Giovanni del Virgilio, a shining light of the university of Bologna, reveals the kindliness and affability of the austere ‘preacher of Justice.’ But he was not to end his days in peace. A storm cloud of war seemed about to burst over Ravenna. According to Venetian accounts—and we have no version of the matter from the other side—the Ravennese had taken Venetian ships and killed Venetian sailors in time of peace without just cause. In consequence the Doge entered into an alliance with the lords of Forlì and Rimini, and prepared to make war upon Ravenna with forces far beyond Guido’s power to meet. In July 1321 an embassy was sent by Guido to the Doge, to avert the war by diplomatic means. Of this embassy Dante formed part. According to Filippo Villani, the Venetians refused the poet a hearing, and forced him, sick with fever, to return by land. It is more probable that Dante returned with offered terms by the quickest way, which would bring him back through the Pineta to Ravenna, where he died on September 14th, 1321, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. The poet of a renovated Empire and a purified Church had passed away on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross—the Cross which he represents in his poem as the mystical bond with which Christ had bound the chariot of the Church to the tree of the Empire (*Purg.* xxxii. 51). He left his Church sinking, though but for a time, still deeper into the scandal and corruption of Avignon; his Empire preparing new degradation for itself now that the Eagle had passed into the greedy and unworthy hands of Bavarian Louis; his Italy torn and rent by factions and dissensions;



his own Florence still ranking him with base barrators, whom he regarded as the vilest of criminals. But the divine work of his life had been completed, and remains an everlasting proof of the doctrine formulated by another poet, five hundred years later: 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.'

### 8. *Dante's Works and First Interpreters*

**Four Periods in Human Life.**—In the *Convivio* (iv. 23, 24) Dante represents human life under the image of an Arch, ascending and descending. For the perfectly-natured the summit of this Arch is in the thirty-fifth year. Life is divided into four ages, like the four seasons of the year. Adolescence, *Adolescenza*, the increase of life, ascends from birth to the twenty-fifth year; Youth or Manhood, *Gioventute*, the perfection and culmination of life, lasts from the twenty-fifth to the forty-fifth year; Age, *Senettute*, descends from the forty-fifth to the seventieth year; after which remains Old Age, *Senio*, the winter of life.

**Three Periods in Dante's Work.**—Dante's work falls into three periods, representing to some extent *Adolescenza*, *Gioventute*, *Senettute*. The first is that of his 'New Life,' the epoch of the worship of the real Beatrice in her life and after her death, in which the youthful poet beheld many things by his intellect, as it were dreaming, *quasi come sognando* (*Conv.* ii. 13). This period comprises the *Vita Nuova*, with a few lyrics connected with it, and closes in the promise to 'yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman.' The second period corresponds to Dante's second age, or *Gioventute*; it is the period in which the image of Beatrice no longer holds the citadel of his mind; it is the period of passion, of political turmoil and philosophical research. In spite of a certain tentativeness and incompleteness, it marks a great advance in nearly every direction. Joined to the first

period by the ode addressed to the angelic motors of the sphere of Venus, it includes the greater part of the superb collection of lyrics (Canzoni or Odes, Ballate, Sonnets) included in the *Canzoniere*; the two unfinished prose treatises which expound the mystical meaning and technical construction of these canzoni, the *Convivio* and the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; and ends with the three political letters connected with Henry VII (1311). To this period may possibly also belong the special treatise in Latin prose on the Monarchy, the *De Monarchia*. The connecting link between the second and third periods is the letter to the Italian Cardinals, after the death of Clement V (1314), which is the latest event referred to in the *Inferno*. This last period is the period of the *Divina Commedia*; the return to Beatrice, but now the allegorical Beatrice; the fulfilment of the supreme promise of the *Vita Nuova*; the result of the labours in art and philosophy which the second period had witnessed, of political experience, and of the spiritual and moral revulsion of Dante's later years, after the bitter disillusion of the Emperor Henry's enterprise and failure: 'A fruit of suffering's excess.' To this period, subsidiary to the *Divine Comedy*, belong the letters to the Florentine friend and to Can Grande, if these are authentic, and the two *Eclogues*.

In addition to these there are certain works ascribed to Dante, but usually regarded as apocryphal: the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra* in Latin prose, which has been already mentioned; the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, and the *Profession of Faith*, in Italian verse. All three are included in the Oxford *Dante*, and the authenticity of the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra* has been most ably defended by Dr. Moore. Also we know of several smaller things of Dante's now lost; the letters mentioned by Leonardo Bruni; a *serventese* containing the names of the sixty most beautiful women in Florence, referred to in the *Vita Nuova* (*V. N.* 6), one of his earliest poems; and a canzone on Love, of peculiar structure, quoted in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (*V. E.* ii. 11).

**Early Commentators.**—No sooner had Dante passed away than his apotheosis commenced in the ode written by Cino da Pistoia, only less excellent than the one he had written thirty years before on the death of Beatrice. A very striking story related by Boccaccio of how, eight months after his death, Dante appeared in a vision, ‘clad in whitest garments and his face shining with an unwonted light,’ to his son Jacopo, to reveal to the world where the manuscript of the last thirteen cantos of the *Paradiso* was hidden, may be a mere legend, but it is surely a very precious one. Straightway the work of commentators commenced, above all at Florence and Bologna. Three commentaries on the *Inferno* are extant, written circa 1324—that of the Bolognese chancellor, Ser Graziolo de’ Bambaglioli; that ascribed to Dante’s son, Jacopo; and that by the unknown Florentine, usually called Selmi’s Anonimo. The earliest extant commentators on the complete poem are the Bolognese Jacopo della Lana and the Florentine author of the *Ottimo Commento*, probably Andrea Lancia; the former wrote shortly before and the latter shortly after 1330.<sup>1</sup> Pietro Alighieri wrote his commentary on his father’s Comedy about 1340. And, before the fourteenth century closed, a new epoch in Dante scholarship was inaugurated by the lectures and commentaries of Giovanni Boccaccio at Florence (1373), Benvenuto da Imola at Bologna (1379), and Francesco da Buti at Pisa (1390). Of all these earlier commentators, Benvenuto da Imola is by far the greatest; and he unites mediæval Dantology with England’s cult of the divine poet, in the first complete edition of his commentary which was given to the world by the Hon. W. Warren Vernon.

In his proem, Ser Graziolo, or his contemporary translator, strikes the keynote of all reverent criticism of the *Divinia Commedia*, and defines the attitude in which the divine poet and his works should be approached:—

<sup>1</sup> The important commentary upon the *Inferno* by the Carmelite, Fra Guido da Pisa, written before 1333, is still unedited.

‘Although the unsearchable Providence of God hath made many men blessed with prudence and virtue, yet before all hath it put Dante Alighieri, a man of noble and profound wisdom, true fosterling of philosophy and lofty poet, the author of this marvellous, singular, and most sapient work. It hath made him a shining light of spiritual felicity and of knowledge to the people and cities of the world, in order that every science, whether of heavenly or of earthly things, should be amply gathered up in this public and famous champion of prudence, and through him be made manifest to the desires of men in witness of the Divine Wisdom; so that, by the new sweetness and universal matter of his song, he should draw the souls of his hearers to self-knowledge, and that, raised above earthly desires, they should come to know not only the beauties of this great author, but should attain to still higher grades of knowledge. To him can be applied the text in Ecclesiasticus: “The great Lord will fill him with the spirit of understanding, and he will pour forth the words of his wisdom as showers.”’



## CHAPTER II

### *Dante's Minor Italian Works*

#### 1. *Guido Guinicelli*

GUIDO GUINICELLI is acknowledged by Dante himself as his master in poetic art and the founder of the great new school of Italian poetry: 'The father of me and of the others, my betters, who ever used sweet and lovely rhymes of love' (*Purg.* xxvi. 97). Guido's 'Canzone of the Gentle Heart':—

'Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore,'

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'To the noble heart ever doth love repair,' the first great Italian lyric of this *dolce stil nuovo*, set forth an ideal creed of love which Dante made his own, and is the most fitting introduction to the *Vita Nuova* and the *Canzoniere*. Love has its proper dwelling in the gentle heart, as light in the sun, for Nature created them simultaneously for each other, and they cannot exist apart. 'The fire of Love is caught in gentle heart as virtue in the precious stone, to which no power descends from the star before the sun makes it a gentle thing. After the sun has drawn forth from it all which there is vile, the star gives it power. So the heart which is made by Nature true, pure, and noble, a woman like a star enamours.' But a base nature will extinguish love as water does fire. Unless a man has true gentleness in his soul, not high birth nor even kingly dignity will ennoble him. Even as God fills the celestial intelligences with the Blessed Vision of His Essence, so the *bella donna* fulfils her

lover with earthly bliss and manifests to him the true nature of gentleness, if he is constant. Nor need man fear to take divine things as similitudes of his love, for such love as this is celestial, and will be accepted in Paradise :—

‘My lady, God shall ask, “What daredst thou?”  
 (When my soul stands with all her acts reviewed)  
 “Thou passedst Heaven, into My sight, as now,  
 To make Me of vain love similitude.  
 To Me doth praise belong,  
 And to the Queen of all the realm of Grace  
 Who slayeth fraud and wrong.”  
 Then may I plead : “As though from Thee he came,  
 Love wore an angel’s face :  
 Lord, if I loved her, count it not my shame.”’

ROSSETTI’S *Translation*.

This superb poem of ‘Maximus Guido’ is quoted several times in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as a perfect type of the supreme form of poetry ; its doctrine of true Nobleness is adopted in the *Convivio* ; one of its lines haunts the memory of Francesca da Rimini in Hell ; its complete development in prose and in verse is found in the pages of the *Vita Nuova*.

## 2. *The Vita Nuova*

‘This glorious poet,’ writes Boccaccio, ‘first when his tears were yet fresh for the death of his Beatrice, about in his twenty-sixth year put together in a little volume, which he called the *New Life*, certain small works, as sonnets and canzoni, made by him in diverse times before and in rhyme, marvellously beautiful ; writing at the head of each, severally and in order, the occasions which had moved him to make it, and adding at the end the divisions of each poem. And although in maturer years he was much ashamed of having made this little book, nevertheless, when his age is considered, it is very beautiful and pleasing, and especially to the general reader.’

But this spotless lily of books is too delicate a flower in

the garden of art to be plucked by the coarser hands of the writer of the *Decameron*. A greater poet than Boccaccio has said of it: 'Throughout the *Vita Nuova* there is a strain like the first falling murmur which reaches the ear in some remote meadow, and prepares us to look upon the sea.' It is a preparation for the *Commedia*, inasmuch as it tells us how the divine singer became a poet, and how she crossed his path who was to be his spiritual pilot over that mighty ocean. Nor can we for a moment accept Boccaccio's statement, that Dante in maturer years was ashamed of having written this book. In the *Convivio*, where he discusses the nature of allegory and interprets every word of certain later poems in an allegorical sense, he suggests no allegorical significance for Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova*; but, while declaring that the *Vita Nuova* was written at the entrance of his youth, he seems to contrast it with his more mature works, to which alone he would apply an allegorical interpretation. And he is most emphatic that this is in no way to derogate from the *Vita Nuova* (*Conv.* i. 1): 'For it is fitting to speak and act differently in one age than in another.'

The *Vita Nuova* is the most spiritual and ethereal romance of love that exists, but its purity is such that comes, not from innocent simplicity of soul, but from self-repression. In the form of a collection of lyrics connected together by a prose narrative (itself a thing of rare and peculiar beauty), with quaint and curious scholastic divisions and explanations, Dante tells the tale of his love for Beatrice, from his first sight of her in their ninth year to a vision which is the anticipation of her final apotheosis. Although conforming with the poetic conventions of the age, especially in the earlier portions, it is based upon a real love story, however deeply tinged with mysticism and embellished with visionary episodes. The heroine in her loveliness and purity becomes an image upon earth of the Divine Beauty and Goodness; the poet's love to her is the stepping-stone to love of the Supreme Good. Dante has learned his lesson from Guido

Guinicelli, and does not fear to take God Himself as a similitude of his love; Heaven itself requires his lady for its perfection of beatitude (Canz. i.); she has her precursor in the Lady Joan, even as St. John went before the True Light (*V. N.* 24); nay, she is a very miracle whose only root is the Blessed Trinity (*V. N.* 30).

Here beginneth the 'New Life,' *Incipit Vita Nova*! We shall probably do well in taking the New Life not as merely meaning the poet's youth, but as referring to the new life that commenced with the dawn of love, the regeneration of the soul. Dante's first meeting with Beatrice at the beginning of her ninth and at the end of his ninth year, when she appeared to him robed in crimson the colour of love and charity—and her 'most sweet salutation' nine years later, when she came dressed all in pure white, the hue of Faith and Purity, between two gentle ladies older than herself,—these things may have a certain analogy with the poetical fiction whereby Dante dates his conversion to God and the vision of the *Divine Comedy* in his thirty-fifth year, 1300, the year of Jubilee. We may perhaps surmise that Dante, looking back from this second meeting, from which his love really dates, artistically worked up the recollections of his childhood to correspond with it; just as many years later, when his whole life altered after the invasion of Henry VII, he looked back in his memory to the great spiritual experience when 'in the middle of the journey of our life.' And, although Dante's own words in the *Convivio* seem to absolutely preclude any possibility of allegorising the figure of Beatrice herself, it is clear that many of the minor episodes in the *Vita Nuova* must be regarded as symbolical.<sup>1</sup>

After the proem, in which the poet's intention is set forth, the *Vita Nuova* falls into three divisions. Each contains ten poems set as gems in a golden prose frame-

<sup>1</sup> An interesting attempt has recently been made to revive the allegorical system of interpreting the *Vita Nuova* in the *Quarterly Review*, July 1896.



work, the end of each part being indicated by a reference to new matter, *nuova materia* (§§ 17, 31). The whole book is closed by an epilogue containing one sonnet, *una cosa nuova*, 'a new thing,' with an introductory episode and a visionary sequel. The main subject of the first part is the love inspired by Beatrice's beauty, the loveliness of the *belle membra*, 'the fair members in which I was enclosed' (*Purg.* xxxi. 50); that of the second, the miracles wrought by the splendour of her soul; that of the third, his worship of her memory, when 'the delight of her fairness departing from our view became great spiritual beauty that spreads through heaven a light of love, which gives bliss to the Angels and makes their lofty and subtle intellect wonder' (*Canz.* iv.).

The first part (§ 2 to § 17) contains Dante's earliest sonnets and ballate, with the story of his youthful love up to a certain point, where, after having passed through a spiritual crisis, he resolves to write upon a new and nobler matter than the past. We have the wondrous effects of Beatrice's salutation; Dante's first sonnet resulting in the friendship with Guido Cavalcanti, to whom the book is dedicated, and who seems to have induced Dante to write in Italian instead of Latin (*V. N.* 31); his concealment of his love by feigning himself enamoured of two other ladies. Throughout the *Vita Nuova*, while Beatrice on earth or in heaven is, as it were, the one central figure in the picture, there is a lovely background of girlish faces behind her; just as, in the paintings of many early Italian masters, there is shown in the centre Madonna and her Divine Babe, while around her all the clouds and sky are full of sweetly smiling cherubs' heads. There have been modern Italian critics to suppose that, while Beatrice represents the ideal of womanhood, these others are the real Florentine women in whom Dante for a while sought this glorious ideal of his mind; others have endeavoured in one or other of the minor characters of the *Vita Nuova* to recognise the Matilda of the Earthly Paradise. And there are visions and dreams interspersed,

in which Love himself appears in visible form, now as a lord of terrible aspect within a cloud of fire with Beatrice in his arms, now by a river side in the garb of a traveller to bid Dante feign love for another lady, now as a youth clad in very white raiment to console him when Beatrice refuses her salutation. It may be that these two latter episodes mean that Dante was for a time enamoured of some girl whom he afterwards represented as the second lady who shielded his real love from discovery, and that he resolved to turn from it to a nobler worship of Beatrice. There is indeed a canzone, not inserted into the *Vita Nuova*, but probably belonging to this epoch (Canz. xvi. in the Oxford *Dante*)—

‘La dispietata mente che pur mira,’

‘Pitiless memory that still gazes back at the time gone by,’ addressed directly to a woman (in this respect unlike all Dante’s other canzoni), which should probably be connected with this second lady, for whom he tells us that he feigned love so strenuously that a false and evil rumour was spread, and ‘she who was the destroyer of all evil, and the queen of all good, coming where I was, denied me her most sweet salutation, in the which alone was my blessedness.’

This part is not wanting in the ‘burning tears’ which Leonardo Bruni finds such a stumbling-block in Boccaccio’s narrative. Its fullest expression must be sought for in a canzone not included in the *Vita Nuova*—

‘E’ m’incresce di me sì duramente,’

‘I grieve for myself so bitterly’ (Canz. xiii.). His love has become a torment; the image of the little maiden who first appeared to him in his boyhood has yielded to that of the woman whose great beauty is an object of desire, for him unattainable. But a complete change comes. The mysterious episode of Dante’s agony at a wedding feast, where Beatrice mocks him, marks a crisis in his new life.

*Io tenni i piedi in quella parte della vita, di là dalla quale non si può ire più per intendimento di ritornare,* 'I set my feet on that part of life beyond the which one can go no further with intention of returning.' He crushes the earthly element out of his love, and will be content to worship her from afar; he has sufficiently made manifest his own condition, even if he should ever after abstain from addressing her. 'It behoved me to take up a new matter and one nobler than the past.'

This *materia nuova e più nobile che la passata* is the subject of the second part of the *Vita Nuova* (§§ 18 to 28). The poet's youthful love has become spiritual adoration for a living personification of all beauty and nobleness. Since Beatrice denies him her salutation, Love has placed all his beatitude in those words that praise his lady: so he tells the lady of very sweet speech, *donna di molto leggiadro parlare*, who questions him concerning this love, and whose rebuke marks the turning-point of the whole book. And, for the first time, the supreme poet is revealed in the great canzone—

'Donne, ch'avete intelletto d'amore,'

'Ladies that have understanding of love,' uniting earth and heaven in glorification of her who was the giver of blessing; and in the two sonnets that follow, the first on the nature of love—

'Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa,'

'Love and the gentle heart are one thing,' based upon the doctrine of Guido Guinicelli, and the second—

'Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore,'

'Within her eyes my lady carries Love,' in which this definition is, as it were, exemplified in the transcendent spiritual power of Beatrice's virtue and beauty. And even these are surpassed by the canzone—

'Donna pietosa e di novella etate.'

‘A lady pitiful and of tender age,’ the anticipatory vision of Beatrice’s death—the ‘Dante’s Dream’ of Rossetti’s masterpiece. The famous sonnet—

‘Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare,’

‘So noble and so pure seems my lady,’ in which a similar sonnet of Guinicelli’s is easily eclipsed, is usually considered the most beautiful of all Italian sonnets; and the following—

‘Vede perfettamente ogni salute,’

‘He seeth perfectly all bliss, who beholds my lady among the ladies,’ is hardly less lovely. And the prose setting (especially §§ 23 and 26) is not unworthy of the gems it encloses. Love now no longer appears weeping, but speaks joyfully in the poet’s heart. All that was personal in Dante’s worship seems to have passed away with his earlier lamentations; his love has become a transcendental rapture, an ecstasy of self-annihilation. Then abruptly, in the composition of a canzone which should have shown how Love by means of Beatrice regenerated his soul, the pen falls from his hand: Beatrice has been called by God to Himself, to be glorious under the banner of Mary. ‘How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!’

Some considerable falling off may be detected in the third part of the *Vita Nuova* (§§ 29 to 41), which includes the prose and poetry connected with Beatrice’s death, the love for the lady who takes pity upon the poet’s grief, his repentance and return to Beatrice’s memory. A stately canzone—

‘Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core,’

‘The eyes that grieve for pity of the heart,’ is a companion piece to the opening canzone of the second part; the poet now speaks of Beatrice’s death in the same form and to the same love-illumined ladies to whom he had formerly sung her praises. After the visit of Dante’s second friend, apparently Beatrice’s brother, and the charming episode of



the poet drawing an Angel on her anniversary, the 'gentle lady, young and very fair,' inspires him with four sonnets; and his incipient love for her is dispelled by a 'strong imagination,' a vision of Beatrice as he had first seen her in her crimson raiment of childhood. The bitterness of Dante's repentance is a foretaste of the confession upon Lethe's bank in the *Purgatorio*. The pilgrims pass through the city on their way to Rome, 'in that season when many folk go to see that blessed likeness which Jesus Christ left us as exemplar of His most beauteous face, which my lady sees in glory' (*V. N.* 41); and this third part closes with the sonnet in which Dante calls upon the pilgrims to tarry a little, till they have heard how Florence lies desolate for the loss of Beatrice.

In the epilogue (§§ 42, 43), in answer to the request of two of those noble ladies who throng the ways of Dante's mystical city of youth and love as God's Angels guard the terraces of the Mount of Purgation, Dante writes the last sonnet of the book; wherein a 'new intelligence,' born of Love, guides the pilgrim spirit beyond the spheres into the Empyrean to behold the blessedness of Beatrice. It is an anticipation of the spiritual ascent of the *Divina Commedia*, which is confirmed in the famous passage which closes the 'new life of love':—

'After writing this sonnet, it was given unto me to behold a very wonderful vision: wherein I saw things which determined me that I would say nothing further of this most blessed one, until such time as I could discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can, as she well knoweth. Wherefore if it be His pleasure, through whom is the life of all things, that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After the which, may it seem good unto Him who is the master of grace, that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady: to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His

countenance, *qui est per omnia saecula benedictus*' (Rossetti's *Trans.*).

From the mention of the pilgrimage and this wonderful vision, it has been sometimes supposed that the closing chapters of the *Vita Nuova* were written in 1300. It seems, however, almost certain that there is no reference whatever to the year of Jubilee in either case. When Dante's positive statement in the *Convivio* that he wrote the *Vita Nuova* at the entrance of his Youth (*gioventute* being the twenty years from twenty-five to forty-five, *Conv.* iv. 24) is compared with the internal evidence of the book itself, the most probable date for its completion would be between 1292 and 1295. This final vision may be taken as some dim foretaste of that supreme ecstatic pilgrimage which, in after years, Dante assigned to the last year of the century.

Mr. C. E. Norton has shown that the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova* are disposed symmetrically round the second canzone, *Donna pietosa e di novella etate*, the poem which connects the life of Beatrice with her death. We have thus a double symmetry, the poems being arranged 'in a triple series of ten around a central unit, or in a triple series of ten followed by a single poem, in which he is guided to heaven by a New Intelligence'; for Beatrice must be accompanied to the end by the mystical number three, and ten is the perfect number, the number of the heavens. This second or central canzone is perhaps the noblest single poem in the book; but the earlier, *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'Amore*, seems to have been more popular and Dante's own favourite. While both are quoted in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (*V. E.* ii. 8, 11, 12), it is as the author of the *Donne che avete* that he is greeted by Bonagiunta of Lucca in the *Purgatorio* (Canto xxiv. 51), and it is in it that the first hint is given us that Dante was even then meditating some work to the glory of Beatrice, which should deal with the unseen mysteries beyond the grave.

In the *Convivio*, where all else is allegorical, Beatrice is still simply his first love, *lo primo amore* (ii. 16). Even when allegorically interpreting the canzone which describes how another lady took her place in his heart, after her death, as referring to Philosophy, there is no hint of any allegory about *quella viva Beatrice beata*, 'that blessed Beatrice, who lives in heaven with the Angels and on earth with my soul' (*Conv.* ii. 2). When about to plunge more deeply into allegorical explanations, he ends what he has to say concerning her by a digression upon the immortality of the soul (*Conv.* ii. 9): 'I so believe, so affirm, and so am certain that after this I shall pass to another better life, there where that glorious lady lives, of whom my soul was enamoured.' Those critics who question the reality of the story of the *Vita Nuova*, or find it difficult to accept without an allegorical or idealistic interpretation, are best answered in Dante's own words: *Questo dubbio è impossibile a risolvere a chi non fosse in simil grado fedele d'Amore; ed a coloro che vi sono, è manifesto ciò che solverebbe le dubbiose parole*, 'This difficulty is impossible to solve for any one who is not in similar grade faithful unto Love; and to those who are so, that is manifest which would solve the dubious words' (*V. N.* 14).

### 3. *The Canzoniere*

Under this heading are included all Dante's lyrical poems, together with a few that are more doubtfully attributed to him. In the *Vita Nuova* were inserted 3 canzoni, 2 shorter poems in the canzone mould, 1 ballata, 25 sonnets (including 2 double sonnets). The Oxford *Dante* in addition to these contains 20 canzoni (including 4 sestine), 9 ballate, 26 sonnets. Of these poems those inserted or referred to in the *Convivio* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, or quoted by the early commentators on the *Divina Commedia*, or by other such contemporary writers, or unanimously assigned to Dante by the best manuscripts,

are unquestionably authentic. It is impossible to speak thus decisively about the majority of the sonnets, or to answer for more than two of the ballate. In dealing with the canzoni or odes, which Dante himself regards as the highest form of poetic art, we are on much surer ground; fifteen of the above, which are given in many manuscripts as a connected whole, are undoubtedly genuine, and some of them must rank among the world's noblest poems.

The *Canzoniere* falls into four great groups of poems, leading from the *Vita Nuova* to the *Divine Comedy*: poems connected with Beatrice and the *Vita Nuova*; poems of the second love, for the allegorical lady of the *Convivio*; poems of passion; ethical and didactic canzoni.

(a) The principal poems of the first group are the two canzoni (xvi. and xiii.) already mentioned in connection with the *Vita Nuova*, for the authenticity of which we have internal evidence and manuscript authority. Of minor lyrics belonging to this epoch the most noteworthy are the charming, but rather overpraised sonnet (xxxii.) to which the genius of Rossetti has given new life on canvas as the 'Boat of Love'; in which the young poet addressing Guido Cavalcanti wishes that they two, with Lapo Gianni and their three ladies, might take an unknown voyage over enchanted seas; and the sonnet (xxix.) 'Of my Lady on All Saints' Day,' belonging undoubtedly to the second period of the *Vita Nuova*: 'I knew an angel visibly,' 'blessed are they who meet her on the earth.' A fine canzone (xvii.), in which the poet strives with Death for his lady's life, can no longer be regarded with any probability as an authentic work of the divine poet.

(b) 'I say and affirm that the lady, of whom I was enamoured after my first love, was the most beautiful and most pure daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name Philosophy' (*Conv.* ii. 16). By some, not entirely reconcilable, process the *donna gentile* who appears at the end of the *Vita Nuova* has become a symbol of Philosophy, and the poet's love for



her a most noble devotion. The opening canzone of this group (vi.)—

‘Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete,’

‘Ye who by intellect move the third heaven,’ describing the conflict in Dante’s mind between this new love and the memory of Beatrice, connects us both with the *Vita Nuova* and with reality. It is commented upon in the second treatise of the *Convivio* and quoted in Canto viii. of the *Paradiso*. The other poems of this group seem purely allegorical: ‘By love in this allegory is always intended that study which is the application of the enamoured soul to that thing of which it is enamoured’ (*Conv.* ii. 16). At first this service is painful and laborious; and the mystical lady seems a cruel and proud mistress, as she is represented in the ‘pitiful ballata’ (x.)—

‘Voi che sapete ragionar d’Amore,’

‘Ye who know how to discourse of love,’ which is referred to in the third treatise of the *Convivio* (iii. 9); and in the sonnet (xxvi.)—

‘Chi guarderà giammai senza paura,’

‘Who will ever gaze without fear into the eyes of this fair maiden.’ But the defect is on the lover’s own part, and in her light the difficulties which sundered him and her are dispersed like morning clouds before the face of the sun. This mystical worship culminates in the supreme hymn to his spiritual mistress, whose body is Wisdom and whose soul is Love—

‘Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona,’

‘Love that in my mind discourses to me of my lady desirously’ (*Canz.* vii.), the second ode of the *Convivio* (quoted in *V. E.* ii. 6), the amorous song that Casella was to sing ‘met in the milder shades of Purgatory.’ Hardly

less beautiful is the canzone (ix.) likewise cited in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (*V. E.* ii. 5, 11)—

‘Amor, che muovi tua virtù dal cielo,’

‘Love that movest thy power from heaven’; though disfigured in modern editions by an extra stanza tacked on to it without regard to sense or metre. To this allegorical group belong, besides a few sonnets, Ballata vi.—

‘Io mi son pargoletta bella e nuova,’

‘I am a maiden fair and young,’ and Canzone xiv.—

‘Io sento sì d’Amor la gran possanza,’

‘I feel so the great power of Love,’ both of which are quoted by the author of the *Ottimo Commento*. In the latter poem Dante represents himself as too young to obtain his lady’s grace, but is content to serve on, finding the quest of philosophic truth its own reward. The lyrics of this group show a close metrical connection with those of the *Vita Nuova*, and were evidently all written before the poet’s exile. Dante originally held that Italian poetry should only be used for writing upon love, and therefore, in his younger days, a philosophical poem would naturally take the form of a love ode. In the *Vita Nuova*, he argues ‘against those who rhyme upon any matter other than amorous; seeing that this mode of speech was originally found for speaking of love’ (*V. N.* 25). His views naturally widened before he wrote his later canzoni (cf. *V. E.* ii. 2).

(c) There are, however, certain lyrics of Dante’s which are almost certainly the expression of passionate love for real women, presumably the disloyalties for which Beatrice will rebuke him in the Garden of Eden. In addition to several sonnets, there are five canzoni of unquestionable authenticity which can hardly admit of an allegorical interpretation. Four are remarkable for a peculiar incessant playing upon the word *pietra* or stone, which has led to the

hypothesis that they were inspired by a lady named Pietra, or at least by one who had been as cold and rigid as Beatrice had been the giver of blessing. The canzone of the *aspro parlare* (Canz. xii.):—

‘Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro,’

‘So in my speech would I be harsh, as this fair stone is in her acts,’ shows that Dante could be as terrible in his love as in his hate. It is indirectly referred to in the *Convivio*, and quoted by Petrarch. The other three canzoni of this ‘stony’ group show very strongly the influence of the Provençal Arnaldo Daniello in their form, and all their imagery is drawn from nature in winter. The first sestina—

‘Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d’ombra,’

‘To the short day and the large circle of shade have I come, alas!’ is the first Italian example of that peculiar variety of the canzone which was invented by Arnaldo (*V. E.* ii. 10, 13). It gives a most wonderful picture of this strange green-robed girl, her golden hair crowned with grass like Botticelli’s Libyan Sibyl, in the meadow ‘girdled about with very lofty hills.’ Less beautiful and more artificial, Sestina ii. (if it can be called so)—

‘Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna,’

‘Love, thou seest well that this lady cares not for thy power,’ is likewise quoted with complacency in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (ii. 13). And the passion of the whole group is summed up in the poem on Love and Winter (Canz. xv.)—

‘Io son venuto al punto della rota,’

‘I am come to the point of the wheel,’ where, stanza by stanza, the external phenomena of the world in winter are contrasted with the state of the poet’s soul, ever burning in the ‘sweet martyrdom’ of love’s fire. These four poems are now usually supposed to have been written before 1300;

but the other canzone of similar tone was certainly written in exile—the famous and much discussed ‘mountain song’ (Canz. xi.)—

‘Amor, dacchè convien pur ch’io mi doglia,’

‘Love, since I needs must make complaint,’ apparently describing an overwhelming passion for the fair lady of the Casentino; its pathetic close with its reference to Florence has been already quoted. Even if the letter to Moroello Malaspina, which is supposed to be connected with it (*vide infra*, chapter iii.), is of doubtful authenticity, the canzone is certainly genuine, and was known to the author of the *Ottimo Commento*; and the striking sonnet to Cino da Pistoia (Sonnet xxxvi.) affords further testimony that, at certain epochs of his life, earthly love took captive Dante’s free-will.

(d) ‘The sweet rhymes of love, which I was wont to search in my thoughts, needs must I leave’ (Canz. viii.)—

‘Le dolci rime d’amor, ch’io solia.’

Thus opens the series of canzoni on Rectitude, commencing with this ode on the spiritual nature of true Nobility, which is expounded in the fourth treatise of the *Convivio*, and, although somewhat unequal, contains one ineffable stanza upon the noble soul in life’s four stages. Less excellent is that on Leggiadria, the ‘gallantry’ which is seen in its supereminent form in the Archangel Gabriel in the *Paradiso*—

‘Poscia ch’ Amor del tutto m’ ha lasciato,’

‘Since love has left me utterly’ (Canz. xix.), which has less inspiration than the other Dantesque lyrics. Canzone x—

‘Doglia mi reca nello core ardire,’

‘Grief brings daring to my heart,’ against vice in general and avarice in particular, is a far more powerful piece of



work; in it we already catch the first notes of the *saeva indignatio* of the *Commedia*. Both these two are cited in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (ii. 2, 12). These three canzoni differ from their predecessors by the larger proportion of short lines in each stanza. Dante is feeling his way to a wider range of subject, to a more popular metrical form and a freer treatment, than seemed possible in his stately 'tragical' love poems. They thus lead us to the *Commedia*. They are certainly later than the philosophical canzoni, and there is no sufficient reason for assuming that they were written before exile, as is frequently done. Metrically they show a certain connection with the final canzone of this group—

'Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute,'

'Three ladies have come around my heart' (Canz. xx.), in which Dante holds his exile as an honour, since the Virtues are his companions in banishment and persecution. This poem, which is quoted by Ser Graziolo de' Bambaglioli and by Pietro Alighieri, is the connecting link between the *Canzoniere* and the *Commedia*; it contains the germ of Dante's favourite prophecy of the Deliverer to come, who shall make Love's darts shine with new lustre and regenerate the world.

#### 4. *The Convivio* 1306-08 ca.

The *Convivio*, or 'Banquet,' bears a somewhat similar relation to the work of Dante's second period as the *Vita Nuova* did to that of his adolescence. Just as after the death of Beatrice he collected his earlier lyrics, furnishing them with prose narrative and commentary, so now in exile he intended to put together fourteen of his later canzoni and write a prose commentary upon them, to the honour and glory of his mystical lady, Philosophy. Dante was certainly not acquainted with Plato's *Symposium*. It was probably from the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius that the

idea came to him of representing Philosophy as a lady; and the contrast between the dying literature of Rome and the new poetry of Italy is happily marked, in that the 'woman of ful greet reverence by semblaunt,' who 'was ful of so greet age, that men ne wolde nat trowen, in no manere, that she were of oure elde' (Chaucer's translation of Boethius), has become the *pargoletta*, the 'maiden fair and young' of the Dantesque ballata:—

'And I imagined her fashioned as a gentle lady: and I could not imagine her in any act that was not merciful; wherefore so willingly did the sense of truth behold her, that scarcely could I turn it from her. And from this imagination I commenced to go there where she showed herself in verity, to wit, in the schools of religious and at the disputations of philosophisers; so that in short space, perchance of thirty months, I commenced to so much taste of her sweetness, that her love drove out and destroyed every other thought' (*Conv.* ii. 13).

The *Convivio* is an attempt to bring philosophy out of the schools of religious and away from the disputations of philosophers, to render her beauty accessible even to the unlearned. 'The *Convivio*,' says Mr. Wicksteed, 'might very well be described as an attempt to throw into popular form the matter of the Aristotelian treatises of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.' Dante would gather up the crumbs which fall from the table where the bread of Angels is eaten, and give a banquet to all who are deprived of this spiritual food. It is the first important work on philosophy written in Italian—an innovation which Dante thinks necessary to defend in the chapters of the introductory treatise, where he explains his reasons for commenting upon these canzoni in the vernacular instead of Latin, and incidentally utters a noteworthy defence of his mother tongue (*Conv.* i. 10-13).

In addition to this principal motive for writing the work, the desire of giving instruction, Dante himself alleges

another—the fear of infamy, *timore d'infamia* (*Conv.* i. 2): ‘I fear the infamy of having followed such great passion as whoso reads the above-mentioned canzoni will conceive to have held sway over me. The which infamy ceases entirely by the present speaking of myself, which shows that not passion, but virtue, has been the moving cause.’ It is evident that Dante intended to comment upon certain of the canzoni addressed to, or at least connected with, real women, and to represent them as allegorical; consumed with a more than Shelleyan passion for reforming the world, he chose this method of getting rid of certain episodes in the past which he, with too much self-severity, regarded as rendering him unworthy of the sublime office he had undertaken. The canzone of the ‘harsh speech’ (*Canz.* xii.) was certainly one of these, and is evidently referred to in the fourth treatise (*Conv.* iv. 26). This plan Dante abandoned when the book was left incomplete; and in the *Purgatorio* he completely altered his attitude towards his past life.

Only the introductory treatise and three of the commentaries were actually written: those on the canzoni *Voi che intendendo*, *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*, *Le dolci rime d'amor*. In each case the literal meaning is expounded first, followed by the allegorical, and a vast display of scholastic learning exhibited. Indeed, if the whole work had been completed on the same scale as these four treatises, there would have been scarcely a subject in heaven or on earth left uninvestigated in the ardent service of this mystical lady, whom the poet in the second treatise—not without considerable inconsistency—represents as the same as the *donna gentile* who appeared towards the end of the *Vita Nuova* (*Conv.* ii. 2). It is surely a strange critical aberration that would see any reference to Gemma Donati in either of these figures, whether real or allegorical. From the first treatise it is evident that the whole work had been fully planned; but it is not possible to reconstruct it with any plausibility, or to decide upon the question of which of the

extant canzoni were to be included, and in what order. From iv. 26 it appears that the passionate canzone, *Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro* (Canz. xii.), was to be allegorised in the seventh treatise; from i. 12, ii. 1, iv. 27, that the canzone of the Three Ladies, *Tre donne intorno al cor* (Canz. xx.), would have been expounded in the fourteenth, where Justice and Allegory were to have been discussed; and, from i. 8 and iii. 15, that the canzone against the vices, *Doglia mi reca* (Canz. x.), was destined for the poetical basis of the last treatise of all. It is thus clear that the *Convivio* would have ended with the two canzoni which form the connecting link between the lyrical poems and the *Divina Commedia*. For the rest, it is certain that there would have been no mention of Beatrice in any of the unwritten treatises. In touching upon the immortality of the soul (*Conv.* ii. 9), Dante had seen fit to end what he had to say of 'that living blessed Beatrice, of whom I do not intend to speak more in this book.' There seems also good reason for doubting whether the canzone for the beautiful lady of the Casentino (Canz. xi.), which is of comparatively late date, would have formed part of the completed work.

Witte and others after him have supposed that the *Convivio* represents an alienation from Beatrice; that the Philosophy, which Dante defines as the amorous use of wisdom, is a presumptuous human science leading man astray from truth and felicity along the dangerous and deceptive paths of free speculation. There is, however, nothing in the book itself to support this interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Dante's attitude towards reason and revelation, philosophy and theology, is essentially the same in the *Convivio* as in the *Divina Commedia*; over all his speculations the Church's authority is acknowledged as supreme, her theological doctrine as infallible. He is evidently feeling his way towards the great work of his life; his philosophy is crystallising into shape.

<sup>1</sup> See Wicksteed's Appendix to Witte's essay on Dante's *Trilogy*.



There are a number of passages which show, if not an absolute contradiction, at least a want of correspondence between the *Convivio* and Dante's other works, the minor works as well as the *Divina Commedia*. One of the most curious is the treatment of Guido da Montefeltro, who, in *Conv.* iv. 28, is 'our most noble Italian,' and a supreme example of religious perfection in old age, whereas in the *Inferno* (Canto xxvii.) he is found in the torturing flames of the evil counsellors. Several opinions are directly or indirectly withdrawn in the *Divine Comedy*; but these are to be rather regarded as mistakes which, in the light of subsequent knowledge, he desired to rectify or repudiate, such as the theory of the shadow on the moon being caused by rarity and density, based upon Averrhoes, and a peculiar arrangement of the celestial hierarchies, derived apparently from Brunetto Latini. Views on the nobility of the vulgar tongue in the first, and on the Roman Empire in the fourth treatise, are more fully and scientifically worked out in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and *De Monarchia* respectively. And in the *Purgatorio* the poet discards his 'dread of infamy,' when he dares not meet Beatrice's gaze in the Garden of Eden; he casts aside the allegorical veil he had tried to draw over a portion of the past, and makes the full confession which we find in Cantos xxx and xxxi.

It has frequently been held that portions of the *Convivio* were written before exile. Nevertheless, while two of the canzoni were well known before 1300, it seems most probable that the prose commentaries took their present shape between Dante's breaking with his fellow exiles and the invasion of Henry vii. A passage concerning Frederick ii, 'the last Emperor of the Romans with respect to the present time, although Rudolph and Adolph and Albert were elected after his death' (*Conv.* iv. 3), shows that the fourth treatise was written before the election of Henry vii in November 1308; while a reference to Gherardo da Cammino, lord of Treviso (iv. 14), must have been written after his death in March 1306. The first treatise, which

speaks of Dante's many wanderings in exile, professes to have been written either when 'youth' was passed, or the entrance of 'youth' was passed (i. 1, *gioventute* being from 25 to 45), from which some writers, taking the former interpretation literally, argue that the first is later than the fourth treatise. Be that as it may, the advent of the new Cæsar, Dante's own return for a while to political activity, probably interrupted his life of study; and, when the storm passed away and left the poet disillusioned, his ideals had changed, another world lay open to his gaze, and the *Convivio* was finally abandoned.

## CHAPTER III

### *Dante's Latin Works*

#### 1. *The De Monarchia* 1310?

**The Empire.**—Upon all the political life of mediæval Italy lay the gigantic shadow of a stupendous edifice, the Holy Roman Empire. Although the barbarians had struck down the body of the Empire of Rome, the spirit of Julius Cæsar was mighty yet, as in Shakespeare's tragedy. The monarchy of Augustus, of Trajan, of Constantine and Justinian, still lived; not in the persons of the impotent Cæsars of Byzantium, but in those of the successors of Charlemagne. From the coronation of Otto the Saxon (962) to the death of the Suabian Frederick II (1250), the mediæval Western world saw in the man whom the Germans recognised as their sovereign the 'King of the Romans ever Augustus,' the Emperor-elect, who when crowned at Rome would be the divine Cæsar, the supreme head of the universal Monarchy and the Vicar of God in things temporal, even as the Pope was the supreme head of the universal Church and the Vicar of God in things spiritual. Church and Monarchy, Papacy and Empire, alike proceeded from God, and were inseparably wedded to Rome, the eternal city; from which as two suns they should shed light upon man's spiritual and temporal paths, as divinely ordained by the infinite goodness of Him from whom the power of Peter and of Cæsar bifurcates as from a point (*Epist.* v. 5).

**Papal Claims.**—With the increase of their temporal power, the successors of Hildebrand, in the twelfth and

thirteenth centuries, had extended their authority from spiritual into purely secular regions. For them the imperial dignity was not of divine origin, but the gift of the Church to Charlemagne and his German successors. 'What is the Teutonic King till consecrated at Rome?' wrote Adrian to Frederick Barbarossa: 'The chair of Peter has given and can withdraw its gifts.' In the interregnum that followed the fall of the house of Suabia, the Popes had claimed to exercise imperial rights in Italy, with disastrous results. They had joined the sword with the pastoral staff; and the Church, by confounding in herself the two governments, had fallen into the mire (*Purg.* xvi. 103-112, 127-129). And this tendency in the Papacy culminated in the extravagant pretensions of Boniface VIII, in his relations towards both the Empire and France, and his famous Bull *Unam Sanctam* (November 1302), declaring that the temporal power of kings is subject to the spiritual power of the priesthood, and directed by it as the body by the soul.

**Date of the *De Monarchia*.**—The *De Monarchia* is Dante's attempt to solve this burning mediæval question of the proper relations of Church and State, of spiritual and temporal authority. Although it is undoubtedly the most famous of Dante's prose works, the most widely divergent views have been, and can be, held as to its date of composition. If the *Vita Nuova* is the most ideal book of love, the *De Monarchia* is perhaps the most purely ideal of political works ever written. Even as Beatrice is the most glorious lady of the poet's mind, *la gloriosa donna della mia mente*, so the temporal monarchy or Empire is to be considered by the poet in its ideal aspect according to the divine intention, *typo et secundum intentionem* (*Mon.* i. 2). Like the *Vita Nuova*, and unlike any other of Dante's longer works, the *De Monarchia* contains no certain mention of the poet's exile, and practically no references or allusions to contemporary events or persons. From this and other considerations, several Dante scholars have held that the *De Monarchia* was written before Dante's exile,



during his political life in Florence. Boccaccio, on the other hand, declares that Dante made this book on the coming of Henry VII—a theory not without followers at the present day. Others, again, consider it more probable that the *De Monarchia* was written towards the close of the poet's life.

**Book I.**—The *De Monarchia* is divided into three books, corresponding to the three questions to be answered touching this most useful and most hidden amongst occult and useful truths, the knowledge of the temporal monarchy (i. 1). In its ideal sense, the temporal monarchy or Empire is defined as 'a unique principdom over all men in time, or in those things and over those things which are measured by time' (i. 2). And the first question arising concerning this temporal monarchy is—whether it is necessary for the well-being of the world.

The proper function of the human race taken as a whole, the ultimate end or goal, for which the Eternal God by His art, which is Nature, brings into being the human race in its universality, is to constantly actualise or bring into play the whole capacity of the possible intellect, for contemplation and for action, for speculation and for operation (i. 3). And, for this almost divine function and goal, the most direct means is universal peace (i. 4). Since it is ordained for this goal, the human race must be guided by one ruling power, the Emperor, with reference to whom all its parts have their order; in subjection to whom, the human race becomes in its unity most like to God (i. 5-9). There must be some one supreme judge to decide by his judgment, mediately or immediately, all contentions; and such a judge can only be the Monarch (i. 10).

Again, the world is best disposed when justice is paramount therein; but this can only be under the Monarch or Emperor, who alone, free from covetousness and supreme in authority, will have the purest will and the greatest power to practise justice upon the earth (i. 11). Under him the human race will be most free, since it will have the fullest use

of free will, the greatest gift of God to man (i. 12). He alone, adorned with judgment and justice in the highest degree, will be best disposed for ruling, and able to dispose others best (i. 13). From him the particular princes receive the common rule by which the human race is governed to peace; his is the dominating will that rules the wills of mortals, disposing them to unity and concord (i. 14, 15). All these and other reasons show that, for the well-being of the world, it is necessary that there should be the monarchy. And they are confirmed by the sacred fact that Christ willed to become man in the plenitude of time, when the world was blessed with universal peace under the perfect monarchy of Augustus, the seamless garment that has since been rent by the nail of cupidity (i. 16).

**Book II.**—The second book answers the question whether the Roman people took to itself this dignity of monarchy, or Empire, by right. But right in things is nothing else than the similitude of the Divine Will, and what God wills in human society is to be held as true and pure right. God's will is invisible; but it is manifested in this matter by the whole history of Rome (ii. 1, 2). The surpassing nobleness of Æneas, and therefore of his descendants (ii. 3); the traditional miracles wrought for the Romans (ii. 4); the devotion of the great Roman citizens from Cincinnatus to Cato, showing that the Roman people in subjecting the world to itself always contemplated the good of the Republic, and therefore the end of right (ii. 5, 6); the manifest adaptation of the Roman people by Nature for ruling the nations with imperial sway (ii. 7);—all these show that it was by right that the Romans acquired the Empire. The hidden judgment of God is sometimes revealed by contest, whether in the collision of champions in an ordeal or in the contention of many striving together for some prize (ii. 8). Such a prize was the Empire of the World, which by divine judgment fell to the Roman people, when all were wrestling for it, and the kings of the

*B. Croce on 'historic theory' interpretation of hist. by one view.*

Assyrians, Egyptians, and Persians, and Alexander himself had failed (ii. 9). Their wars, too, from the earliest times were under the form of an ordeal; and Divine Providence declared in their favour. Thus arguments resting on principles of reason prove that the Roman people acquired the supreme and universal jurisdiction by right (ii. 10, 11). And arguments based upon principles of Christian faith support it. Christ by His birth, under the edict of Augustus, confirmed the imperial jurisdiction from which that edict proceeded; and, by His death under the vicar of Tiberius, He confirmed the universal penal jurisdiction of the Emperor over all the human race which was to be punished in His flesh (ii. 12, 13). 'Let them cease then to insult the Roman Empire, who pretend that they are the sons of the Church; when they see that Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, sanctioned the Roman Empire at the beginning and at the end of His warfare upon earth.'

**Book III.**—And this rebuke to the clergy, from whom the main opposition to the Empire proceeded, naturally leads to the great question of the third book, the pith of the whole treatise. Does the authority of the Roman Monarch or Emperor, who is thus by right the monarch of the world, depend immediately upon God, or upon some vicar of God, the successor of Peter? (iii. 1, 2, 3.) The stock arguments of those who assert from passages of Scripture, such as the creation of the sun and moon, or the two swords mentioned in St. Luke's Gospel, that the authority of the Empire depends upon that of the Church, are readily brushed away (iii. 4-9). And, as for their historical evidence, the donation of Constantine, if genuine, was invalid; the coronation of Charlemagne was an act of usurpation (iii. 10, 11). The authority of the Church cannot be the cause of the imperial authority, since the latter was efficient and was confirmed by Christ before the Church existed (iii. 13). Neither has the Church this power of authorising the Emperor from God, nor from herself, nor



from any Emperor, nor from the consent of the majority of mankind; indeed, such power is absolutely contrary to her very nature and the words of her Divine Founder (iii. 14, 15).

But it may be directly shown that the authority of the Emperor depends immediately upon God. For man, since he alone partakes of corruptibility and incorruptibility, is ordained for two ultimate ends—blessedness of this life, which is figured in the Earthly Paradise, and blessedness of life eternal, which consists in the fruition of the Divine Aspect in the Celestial Paradise. To these two beatitudes, as to diverse ends, man must come by diverse means. For to the first we come by philosophic teachings, provided that we follow them by acting in accordance with the moral and intellectual virtues; to the second by spiritual teachings, transcending human reason, provided we follow them by acting in accordance with the theological virtues, Faith, Hope, Charity. But in spite of reason and revelation, which make these ends and means known to us, human cupidity would reject them, 'were not men, like horses, going astray in their brutishness, held in the way by bit and rein.' 'Wherefore man had need of a twofold directive power according to his twofold goal, to wit, the Chief Pontiff, who in accordance with things revealed should lead the human race to eternal life, and the Emperor, who in accordance with the teachings of philosophy should direct the human race to temporal felicity.' It is the special function of the Emperor to establish liberty and peace upon earth, to make the world correspond to the divinely ordained disposition of the heavens. Therefore he is chosen and confirmed by God alone; the so-called Electors are only the proclaimers (*denunciatores*) of the Divine Providence. 'Thus, then, it is plain that the authority of the temporal Monarch descends upon him without any mean from the fountain of Universal Authority.' Yet it must not be taken that the Roman Prince is not subject in anything to the Roman Pontiff, since this



mortal felicity is in some sort ordained for immortal felicity. 'Let Cæsar, therefore, observe that reverence to Peter which a firstborn son ought to observe to a father, so that illuminated by the light of paternal grace he may with greater power irradiate the world, over which he is set by Him alone who is Ruler of all things spiritual and temporal' (*Mon.* iii. 16).

**Reception of the Work.**—The *De Monarchia*, whenever it may have been composed, remained almost unknown until the great conflict between Louis of Bavaria and Pope John xxii, after Dante's death. Boccaccio tells us that the Imperialists used arguments from the book in support of their claims, and it became in consequence very famous. A tempest of clerical indignation roared round it. A Dominican friar, Guido Vernani, wrote a virulent, but occasionally acute treatise 'on the power of the Supreme Pontiff and in confutation of the *Monarchy* composed by Dante Alighieri,' which he dedicated to Ser Graziolo de' Bambaglioli, then Chancellor of Bologna, Dante's famous commentator and apologist. The notorious Cardinal Bertrando del Poggetto, who had been sent as Papal Legate in 1326 by John xxii, had the *De Monarchia* burnt as heretical, and followed this up by an infamous attempt to desecrate Dante's tomb. In the sixteenth century it was placed upon the Index of Prohibited Books. Dante had anticipated this, and the splendid passage which opens the third book of the *De Monarchia* strikes the keynote, not only of this treatise, but of all his life-work for what he conceived the service of God and the welfare of man:—

'Perchance it may arouse a certain amount of indignation against me, for the truth of it cannot appear without causing shame to certain men. But seeing that Truth from its changeless throne appeals to me; that Solomon too, entering on the forest of his proverbs, teaches me in his own person "to meditate on truth, to hate the wicked"; seeing that the Philosopher, my instructor in morals, bids

me for the sake of truth to put aside what is dearest; I will, therefore, take confidence from the words of Daniel, in which the power of God, the shield of the defenders of truth, is set forth; and according to the exhortation of St. Paul, "putting on the breastplate of faith," and in the heat of that coal which one of the Seraphim had taken off the altar and laid on the lips of Isaiah, I will enter on the present contest, and, by the arm of Him who delivered us by His blood from the powers of darkness, drive out from the lists the wicked and the liar in the sight of all the world. Why should I fear, when the Spirit, who is coeternal with the Father and the Son, saith by the mouth of David: "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not be afraid of evil report"?''

epoch of the Comento 2. *The De Vulgari Eloquentia* 1305 ca. - 08

In the first treatise of the *Convivio* (i. 5), Dante announces his intention of making a book upon *Volgare Eloquenza*, or the Vulgar Tongue. Like the *Convivio*, the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* remains incompleted; only two books, instead of four, were written, and of these the second is not finished. In the first book the poet seeks the highest form of the vernacular, a perfect and imperial Italian language, to rule in unity and concord over all the dialects, as the Roman Empire over all the nations; in the second book he was proceeding to show how this illustrious vulgar tongue should be used for the art of poetry. Villani's description of the work applies only to the first book: 'Here, in strong and ornate Latin, and with fair reasons, he reproves all the dialects of Italy'; Boccaccio's mainly to the second: 'A little book in Latin prose, in which he intended to give instruction, to whoso would receive it, concerning composition in rhyme.'

**Book I.**—At the outset Dante strikes a new and higher note than in the *Convivio*, by boldly asserting that the Vulgar Tongue is nobler than Latin (*V. E.* i. 1). 'He

attacks,' wrote Mazzini, 'all the Italian dialects, but it is because he intends to found a language common to all Italy, to create a form worthy of representing the national idea.'

To search out this noblest form of the vulgar tongue, the poet starts from the very origin of language itself. To man alone of creatures has the intercourse of speech been given: speech, the rational and sensible sign needed for the intercommunication of ideas. Adam and his descendants spoke Hebrew until the confusion of Babel (*cf.* the totally different theory in *Par.* xxvi. 124), after which this sacred speech remained only with the children of Heber (i. 2-7).

Of the threefold language brought to Europe after the dispersion, the southernmost idiom has varied into three forms of vernacular speech—the language of those who in affirmation say *oc* (Spanish and Provençal), the language of *oil* (French), the language of *sì* (Italian). And this Italian vulgar tongue has itself varied into a number of dialects, all more or less objectionable, and unlike the ideal Italian which the writer is seeking. The Roman is worst of all (i. 11). A certain ideal language was indeed spoken by the poets at the Sicilian court of Frederick and Manfredi, but it was not the Sicilian dialect (i. 12). The Tuscans speak a degraded vernacular, although Guido Cavalcanti, Lapo Gianni and another Florentine (Dante himself), and Cino da Pistoia have recognised the excellence of the ideal vulgar tongue (i. 13).

Bologna alone has a 'locution tempered to a laudable suavity'; but which, nevertheless, cannot be the ideal language, or Guido Guinicelli and other Bolognese poets would not have written their poems in a form of speech quite different from the special dialect of Bologna (i. 15). 'The illustrious, cardinal, courtly, and curial vulgar tongue in Italy is that which belongs to every Italian city, and yet seems to belong to none, and by which all the local dialects of the Italians are measured, weighed, and compared' (i. 16). This is that ideal Italian which has been artistically developed by Cino and his friend (Dante himself) in their canzoni, and which



makes its familiars so glorious that 'in the sweetness of this glory we cast our exile behind our backs' (*V. E.* i. 17). Such should be the language of the imperial court, although as far as Italy is concerned there is at present no Emperor, and that court is scattered, though its members are united by the gracious light of reason (i. 18).

**Book II.**—The unfinished second book is of the utmost value to the student of Italian poetic form. It makes us realise, too, how zealously Dante sought out technical perfection and studied subtle musical and rhythmical effects, curiously weighing the divisions of his stanzas, balancing lines, selecting words, harmonising syllables. No less noteworthy are his modest references to his own work and his generous appreciation of that of others, his predecessors and contemporaries, with reference to whose poems as well as to his own he illustrates his maxims. There is a certain limitation in that Dante conceives of poetry as only lyrical and written to be set to music: 'Poetry is nothing else than a rhetorical fiction musically composed,' *fictio rethorica musicæ composita* (ii. 4); and recognises only the most elaborate and least spontaneous forms of lyrical poetry—the Canzone (of which the Sestina is only a variety), the Ballata, the Sonnet (ii. 3). There is no hint of that splendid rhythm, at once epical and lyrical, in which the *Divina Commedia* was to be written; though it is possible that Dante would have mentioned it in the fourth book, in which he intended to treat of the 'intermediate vulgar tongue,' which is the language suited to the 'comic' style, in which sometimes this intermediate and sometimes the lower vulgar tongue may be used (ii. 4).

The illustrious vulgar tongue having been found, Dante proceeds to thus show the noblest use to which it can be put by the poet. Only three subjects are sufficiently exalted to be sung of in this stateliest form of Italian speech, this highest vernacular:—*Salus*, *Venus*, *Virtus*; or those things which specially relate to them:—the rightful use of arms, the fire of love, the direction of the will; and the



first of these themes had not been handled, according to Dante, by any Italian poet (ii. 2). Of the three legitimate lyrical forms the Canzone or Ode is noblest, and contains the 'fundamental brainwork' of the most illustrious poets (ii. 3). And the Ballata is nobler than the Sonnet. It is in the Canzone alone, in the 'tragic' or highest style, that these sublime themes are to be sung; to harmonise with this, lines, construction, words must all be the stateliest and noblest. In this superexcellent sense, a canzone is a poem in the loftiest style composed of equal stanzas, upon one subject, without the repetition of a refrain.<sup>1</sup> And the rest of the book is occupied with rules for its proper construction, especially with regard to the structure and musical setting of the various types of stanza, in which the whole art of the canzone is contained.

**Date of Composition.**—The *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was probably written about the same time as the *Convivio*. From a mention of the Marquis Giovanni of Monferrato apparently as living (*V. E.* i. 12), who died in February 1305, it has been supposed that Book i. cannot be much later than the beginning of that year,—but this is very doubtful. Dante's evident friendly feeling for Bologna (which altered before he wrote the *Commedia*) may be connected with the time when the Florentine exiles were welcomed in that city, before the expulsion of March 1st, 1306. The opening of Book ii. seems to imply that Dante was resuming work after an interval, slight or considerable. While it is usually thought to have been written shortly after Book i., probably in 1308 or 1309, some consider Book ii. a much later piece of work, produced as a poetical text-book at Ravenna, and broken off, as Villani

<sup>1</sup> *Aequalium stantiarum sine responsorio ad unam sententiam tragica conjugatio* (ii. 8). The *sine responsorio* distinguishes the true Canzone, *canzone distesa*, from the *Ballata*, *canzone a ballo*, in which the ripresa of from two to four lines was repeated after each stanza as well as sung as a prelude to the whole. Mr. Howell translates it 'without choral interludes.'

and Boccaccio suggest, by Dante's untimely death. A curious passage (*V. E.* ii. 6), about the discretion and magnificence of the Marquis of Este, would in this case refer to Rainaldo d'Este, who, after the return of his house to Ferrara in 1317, had entered into an alliance with Can Grande, and who, though sharing government with two kinsmen, was the real ruler of the state. Nevertheless, when the tone of the work and the probable dates of the lyrics quoted be taken into account, it seems more probable that the whole of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* belongs to the epoch of the *Convivio*; and, like that book, was interrupted by the Italian expedition of Henry VII, and then abandoned when the poet turned to the *Divine Comedy*.

### 3. *Dante's Letters*

Dante tells us in the *Vita Nuova* that, on the death of Beatrice, he wrote a Latin letter to the chief persons of the city, concerning its desolate and widowed condition, commencing with the text of Jeremiah: 'How doth the city sit solitary.' Neither this nor the letter mentioned by Leonardo Bruni, in which Dante described the fight at Campaldino, has survived. Many epistles ascribed to Dante were extant in the days of Boccaccio and Bruni. Boccaccio has preserved three to us in the Laurentian manuscript, now believed to be really his autograph. Bruni tells us that, after the affair at Lastra, Dante wrote for permission to return to Florence both to individual citizens and to the people, especially a long letter, beginning—'O my people, what have I done unto thee?' This may, perhaps, have been the document which Bruni seems to have seen, in which the poet defends his impartiality when the leaders of the two factions were banished; and there appears to have been another, denying that he had accompanied the Emperor against Florence. From one of these the oft quoted fragment may have come, about his want of prudence in the priorate and his service at Campaldino. Giovanni Villani

mentions three noble epistles, the style of which he praises highly : one to the Government of Florence, 'complaining of his unjust exile,' which is probably the lost letter mentioned by Bruni, although it is often identified with the extant letter 'to the most wicked Florentines within'; the second, to the Emperor Henry, is certainly the one we now have; the third, to the Italian cardinals, may probably be identified with the extant letter from Boccaccio's manuscript.

Of the ten extant Latin letters ascribed to the divine poet, only one, to Henry VII, is almost universally accepted as genuine; but the authenticity of five others, including the Epistle to Can Grande, is at least highly probable.

**Epistles I. and II.**—Epistles i. and ii. are connected with Count Alessandro da Romena, who, Bruni states, was appointed captain of the Bianchi in their meeting at Gorgonzola, and whom Dante brands with infamy in *Inferno* xxx. The former is addressed in the name of Alessandro (if the A.C.A. of the Vatican manuscript = Alexander capitaneus = Alessandro da Romena, which is questionable), and the council and body of the White party, to the Cardinal Niccolò da Prato, legate of Benedict XI, assuring him of their gratitude and confidence, promising to refrain from hostilities in expectation of his good offices in the pacification of Florence. It may, perhaps, be an authentic document of 1304; but there is nothing to connect it with Dante, who had probably already left his fellow exiles. The second is a letter of condolence to Alessandro's nephews, Oberto and Guido, on the occasion of their uncle's death. It is not easy to decide whether it is a forgery or a genuine letter wrongly ascribed to Dante. Written by him, it certainly is not.

**Epistles III. and IV.**—Epistles iii. and iv. are of much greater interest, and, if authentic, would be of peculiar value to the student of the *Canzoniere*. The third is addressed to the Marquis Moroello Malaspina, apparently from the Casentino, and describes in forcible language how the writer was suddenly enamoured of a woman's beauty. The

fourth seems to be to Cino da Pistoia, affectionate greetings from the Florentine exile to the Pistoian, and explaining how one passion may be replaced by another in the soul. In each case the letter appears to have been accompanied by a poem; the former by Canzone xi., 'Love, since I needs must make complaint'; the latter by Sonnet xxxvi., 'I have been with love.' Both epistles are usually regarded as spurious, but the matter is far from certain. The letter to Moroello shows a very striking correspondence in tone to several of Dante's lyrics: attempts have been made to give it an allegorical significance. The letter to Cino is found in Boccaccio's manuscript.

**Epistles V., VI. and VII.**—Next come the five great political letters; the three glorified political pamphlets on the enterprise of Henry of Luxemburg, the vindication of Dante's own attitude towards the Church, the refusal of the amnesty. Letter v., to the Princes and Peoples of Italy, seems to have been written before September 1310, when Henry crossed the Alps. In the enthusiasm and boundless hope inspired by the news of the Emperor's grand designs, Dante hardly contemplates the possibility of any resistance being offered to the Roman prince, the supreme lord of earth and sea. It was in the bitter indignation caused by the Italian opposition, and the doubt occasioned by the Emperor's delay in Lombardy, that he wrote Letters vi. and vii., on March 31st to the Florentines, 'the most wicked Florentines within,' and on April 16th, 1311, to Henry himself, 'the most sacred triumphant and only lord.' The latter exists in several manuscripts, and is certainly the epistle mentioned by Villani; there is an old Italian version of it. The former, if probably not the one spoken of by Villani, seems referred to (as well as the humbler letter) by Leonardo Bruni. The case is not so strong for Letter v., of which there is also an old translation; but there are two mss. of its Latin text now known.

**Epistles VIII. and IX.**—The authenticity of Epistle viii., to the Italian cardinals, and Epistle ix., to a



Florentine friend, has been much disputed. Both are only found in Boccaccio's autograph manuscript, which in itself by no means proves that they are genuine, as the same manuscript contains the undoubtedly spurious letter of Fra Ilario to Uguccone della Faggiuola, with the story of Dante's visit to the Convent of Santa Croce del Corvo and the impossible dedications of the three parts of the *Commedia* to Uguccone, Moroello Malaspina, and Frederick of Sicily. It may, however, be inferred from Boccaccio's use of these, in his Life of Dante, that he accepted the letter to the Florentine friend as authentic, but questioned the contents of the Ilarian document. The letter to the cardinals seems to be quoted by Petrarch in his ode, which some Petrarchan students still suppose to be addressed to Rienzi. Unless we assume it to be a highly skilful forgery for political purposes in connection with the scandals of Avignon, which somehow came into Boccaccio's possession, we must accept it as genuine, and identify it with the letter mentioned by Villani. It is a superb protest of a devout and learned layman against a corrupt and ignorant clergy, of a Catholic and an Italian patriot against the papal desertion of Rome. It is not the Ark with which he concerns himself, but the kicking oxen who are dragging it from the right path. In this letter, as in his Comedy, Dante stands forth as the Jeremiah of the Church in the new law, weeping for Rome as Jeremiah for Jerusalem during the captivity of Babylon. This letter was probably written in the latter half of 1314; the letter to the Florentine friend, the occasion of which has been already discussed in chapter i., seems to have been written in 1316. Both show much moderation and calm dignity, when compared with the three letters connected with the expedition of Henry VII. It has been suggested that both, together with the letter to Cino and the epistle of Fra Ilario, are fabrications of Boccaccio himself; but there is absolutely no evidence to support this unpleasant theory.

4. *The Epistle to Can Grande*

This tenth Dantesque Epistle is a miniature philosophical treatise in epistolary form. It is at once a dedication of the *Paradiso* to the young lord of Verona, vicar-general of the Empire, and a prose preface to the whole of the vision in the shape of a commentary upon the first canto of the third Cantic. If genuine, and its authenticity though much disputed seems highly probable, it would have been written in 1318 or 1319, and apparently from Ravenna. Some of the early commentators, especially Fra Guido da Pisa, seem to make use of it without definite acknowledgment; it was first distinctly quoted by Filippo Villani in 1391, and published first in 1700, before any of Dante's letters had seen the light, excepting the unsatisfactory Italian version of the Epistle to Henry of Luxemburg.

Commencing with language of enthusiastic praise and grateful friendship, which recalls analogous passages in *Paradiso* xvii., the poet prepares to pay back the benefits he has received with the dedication of this work; of which he distinguishes the literal and allegorical meanings, defines the title of the whole ('The Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Florentine by birth, not by customs') and of the part, and explains the difference between comedy and tragedy from a somewhat different point of view to that of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (ii. 4). The subject of the *Paradiso*, in the literal sense, is the state of the blessed after death; in the allegorical sense, man in so far as by meriting he is subject to Justice rewarding. 'The end of the whole and of the part is to remove those living in this life from their state of misery, and to lead them to the state of felicity' (*Epist.* x. 15). Then follows a minute scholastic and mystical interpretation of the opening lines of the first canto of the *Paradiso* in the literal sense, closing in an eloquent and very beautiful summary of the ascent through the spheres of Paradise to find true beatitude in the vision of the Divine Essence. And throughout this part of the letter Dante, when touching

upon the details of his vision, always speaks of himself in the third person, evidently following the example of St. Paul in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. That passionate self-reproach, which sounds in so many passages of the *Divine Comedy*, makes itself heard here too. If the invidious do not believe in the power of the human intellect to so transcend human conditions, let them read the examples cited from Scripture and the mystical treatises of Richard of St. Victor, Bernard, Augustine. But if the unworthiness of the speaker makes them question such an elevation, let them see in Daniel how Nebuchodonosor by divine inspiration had a vision against sinners: 'For He, "who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust," sometimes in mercy for conversion, sometimes in severity for punishment, more or less, as He wills, manifests His glory even to those that live ill' (*Epist.* x. 28).

### 5. *The Eclogues*

Belonging, like the tenth Epistle, to that closing period of Dante's life when he was engaged on the *Paradiso*, are two delightful pastoral poems in Latin hexameters.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the testimony of Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni, their authenticity has been questioned. The earliest of the manuscripts is in Boccaccio's autograph in the Laurentian Library. No weight need be attached to these doubts, so far as the first Eclogue is concerned.

Giovanni del Virgilio, a young lecturer and a poet, had written to Dante from Bologna a letter in Latin verse, expressing his profound admiration for the singer of the *Divine Comedy*, but respectfully remonstrating with him for writing in Italian, and suggesting some stirring contemporary subjects as worthy matters for his muse: the death of Henry VII,

<sup>1</sup> The *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra* would, if genuine, belong to this same epoch. See Bibliographical Appendix.

the battle of Montecatini, a victory of Can Grande over the Paduans, the naval expedition of King Robert of Naples to the relief of Genoa. The reference to this last event shows that the letter cannot have been written before July 1318. It further contains a pressing invitation to come and take the laurel crown at Bologna, or at least to answer the letter, 'if it vex thee not, to have read first the nerveless numbers which the rash goose cackles to the clear-voiced swan.'

In answer to this Dante's first Eclogue is in the pastoral style,—Dante himself and his fellow-exile Dino Perini (whom Boccaccio afterwards knew) appearing as shepherds, Tityrus and Meliboeus, discussing the invitation from Mopsus. In a medley of generous praise and kindly banter Dante declines to visit Bologna, 'that knows not the gods,' and still hopes to receive the poet's crown at Florence. When the *Paradiso* is finished, then will it be time to think of ivy and laurel; and in the meanwhile, to convert Mopsus from his errors with respect to vernacular poetry, he will send him ten measures of milk fresh from the fairest ewe of all his flock—ten cantos from the *Paradiso*, which apparently are not yet written, since the ewe is yet un milked.

Mopsus in his answer expresses the intense admiration with which he and his fellow Arcadians have heard this song, and adopts the same style. Condoling with Dante on his unjust exile, he foresees his return home and reunion with Phyllis, either Gemma herself or (as Carducci seems to think) an impersonification of Florence. But, in the meanwhile, pastoral pleasures and an enthusiastic welcome await him at Bologna, if Iolas (Guido da Polenta) will let him go. A reference to Dante meeting Phrygian Muso fixes approximately the date; shortly before September 1319 Albertino Mussato, the person meant, was at Bologna, endeavouring to get aid from the Guelf communes for the Paduans against Can Grande. Dante could hardly have with consistency accepted the invitation.

According to an anonymous writer of the fourteenth



century (commenting upon certain verses sent by Giovanni del Vi gilio to Albertino Mussato), Dante delayed a year before answering this Eclogue, and then his reply was forwarded after his death, by one of his sons. The second Eclogue is probably almost the last of his utterances; the astronomical description of the season of the year in its opening lines brings us to the end of April, which can only be the April of 1320 or 1321. A new friend of his last days is introduced to us; the shepherd Alpheisiboeus, who is said to be Fiducio de' Milotti, a distinguished physician of the day. The tone is the same as that of the other Eclogues. Ravenna becomes the pastures of Pelorus, while Bologna is the Cyclops' cave, to which Dante still refuses to go, for fear of Polyphemus, who is probably Robert of Naples, though there are other claimants to the doubtful honour. And the crown expected now is no longer one which any earthly city can give: 'For this illustrious head already the Pruner is hastening to select a perpetual garland.'

These two Eclogues are of priceless value. Nowhere else is such a comparatively bright picture of Dante's closing days given us. The genuine and hearty laughter which greets Giovanni's two letters, the generous tone of the supreme singer towards the young scholar poet, the kindly joking at the expense of Dino, make delightful reading and show us quite another side of Dante's character. Giovanni's first letter seems to imply that parts of the *Divine Comedy* had not only been published, but had acquired a certain popularity. From Dante's first Eclogue it follows that, in 1318 or 1319, both *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* were completed, and that the *Paradiso* was in preparation: 'When the heavens and the starry dwellers shall be made manifest in my song, as now the lower realms, then will it be pleasant to crown my head with ivy and laurel!' And after this the passage in the second Eclogue, apparently referring to the 'crown of life,' has the same pathos and sanctity as Petrarch's note on the last line of

his *Triumph of Eternity*, or the abrupt ending of Shelley's *Triumph of Life* :—

‘ Hoc illustre caput, cui iam frondator in alta  
Virgine perpetuas festinat cernere frondes.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘ This illustrious head, for which the Pruner is already hastening to select perpetual leaves from the noble laurel,’ or, perhaps, ‘ to decree a perpetual garland in the divine justice,’ according to whether the Virgin is taken as Daphne or Astræa.

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Divina Commedia*

#### 1. *Introductory*

**Letter and Allegory.**—The *Divina Commedia* is a vision and an allegory. It is a vision of the world beyond the grave; it is an allegory, based upon that vision, of the life and destiny of man, his need of light and guidance, his duties to the temporal and spiritual powers, to the Empire and the Church. In the literal sense, the subject is the state of souls after death. In the allegorical sense, according to the Epistle to Can Grande, the subject is ‘man as by freedom of will, meriting and demeriting, he is subject to Justice rewarding or punishing’ (*Ep.* x. 11). There is, therefore, the distinction between the essential Hell, Purgatory, Paradise of separated spirits—the lost and the redeemed—after death; and the moral or spiritual Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, of men still united to their bodies in this life, using their free will for good or for evil; sinning, doing penance, living virtuously. The *Inferno* represents the state of ignorance and vice; the *Purgatorio* is the life of converted sinners, obeying Cæsar and reconciled to Peter, doing penance and striving Godwards; after the state of innocence has been regained in the Earthly Paradise, the *Paradiso* represents the ideal life of action and contemplation, closing in an earthly foretaste of the Beatific Vision. The whole poem is the mystical epos of the Freedom of Man’s Will.

**Metrical Structure.**—Each of the three Canticas is

divided into cantos: the *Inferno* into thirty-four, the *Purgatorio* into thirty-three, the *Paradiso* into thirty-three—thus making up a hundred cantos, the square of the perfect number. Each canto is composed of from thirty-eight to fifty-three *terzine* or *terzette*, continuous measures of three normally hendecasyllabic lines, woven together by the rhymes of the middle lines, with an extra line or *tornello* rhyming with the second line of the last *terzina* to close the canto:—

ABA, BCB, CDC, DED . . . **XYX**, **YZYZ**.

This *terza rima* seems to be derived from one of the rather numerous forms of the Italian *serventese* or *sermontese*, a species of poem introduced from Provence in the latter half of the thirteenth century. The Provençal *sirventes* was a serviceable composition employed mainly for satirical, political, and ethical purposes, in contrast with the stately and ‘tragical’ canzone of Love. Although the Italians extended its range of subject and developed its metres, no one before Dante had used it for a great poem or had transfigured it into this superb new measure, at once lyrical and epical. In his hand, indeed, ‘the thing became a trumpet,’ sounding from earth to heaven, to call the dead to judgment.

**Sources.**—The earlier mediæval visions of the spirit world, mainly Irish in origin, bear the same relation, in a much slighter degree, to the spiritual content of the *Commedia* as the Provençal *sirventes* does to its metrical form. Even if Dante was acquainted with them (and indeed his Lucifer seems rather closely related to the three chief monsters of Tundal’s vision), he was absolutely justified in asserting, in *Purgatorio* xvi., that God willed that he should see His court ‘by method wholly out of modern use:’—

‘Per modo tutto fuor del modern’ uso.’

Such ideas, even in special details, were common property. Dante first set them forth in a supreme work of art, making



a vision the vehicle of all that was noblest in the thought and profoundest in the learning of the Middle Ages. If a hint or two came from *Ibernia fabulosa*, as Ariosto calls Ireland, the main suggestion was Roman; and Virgil, especially in the Fourth Eclogue and Book vi. of the *Æneid*, was his imperial master in very fact, as he was his guide by poetical fiction (*Inf.* i. 82-87): 'O glory and light of other poets! May the long zeal avail me, and the great love, that made me search thy volume. Thou art my master and my author. Thou alone art he from whom I took the good style that hath done me honour.'

Though versed in a supereminent degree with all the knowledge, sacred and profane, possible to a man of his epoch, and well-read to an almost incredible extent when the circumstances of his life are considered, Dante's main and direct source of inspiration lay, not in books, but in that wonderful world of the closing Middle Ages that lay open to his gaze, as from a celestial watch-tower of contemplation: 'The little space of earth that maketh us so fierce, as I turned me with the eternal Twins, all appeared to me from the hills to the sea' (*Par.* xxii. 151-153).

**Virgil and Beatrice.**—The end of the poem, as the Epistle to Can Grande shows, is to remove those living in this life from the state of misery, and lead them to the state of felicity. In the individual, this will be accomplished by opening his eyes to the nature of vice; by inducing him to contrition, confession, satisfaction; by leading him to contemplation of eternal Truth. In the universality, it can only be effected by the restoration of the Empire and the purification of the Church. Just as man has two ends to be reached by different means, as appears from the *De Monarchia*, so Dante has two guides: Virgil and Beatrice. In the allegorical sense, Virgil is usually said to represent either Reason or Human Philosophy; Beatrice to stand for Revelation or Divine Philosophy, which includes Theology. At times Virgil seems invested with the imperial power, and Beatrice with the authority of the Church. If we call

them Human Wisdom, and Divine or Heavenly Wisdom, we shall perhaps include all these things, understanding by Divine Wisdom 'all the wisdom divinely revealed to man to raise him above earthly things and bring him near to God.' The allegory is dropped in part where Dante's 'sweetest father' leaves him in the Earthly Paradise to return to his own sad place in Limbo; and entirely when Beatrice is last seen enthroned in glory beneath Madonna's throne.

There is then a universal and a personal meaning to be distinguished, as well as the literal and allegorical significations. The *Divina Commedia* is the tribute of devotion from one poet to another; it is the sequel to a real love, a man's tribute to the memory of a woman loved in youth; it is the story of one man's conversion from a morally unworthy life. Nor can we doubt that the study of the imperial poet of *alma Roma* helped Dante to his great political conception of the destiny of the Empire, even as Philosophy first lifted him from the moral aberrations that severed him from the ideal life (*Purg.* xxiii. 118). But at the same time Dante represents all mankind; as Witte remarks, 'The poet stands as the type of the whole race of fallen man, called to salvation.'

**Dates and Epoch.**—Although the vision is poetically placed in the spring of 1300, during the Pope's jubilee and shortly before Dante's election to the priorate, the *Divina Commedia* must be regarded as the work of the closing years of his life. We do not know when it was commenced; but although it may have been written at intervals, and afterwards revised so as to bring it up to date, it is fairly certain that the poem took final shape between the death of Clement v and Dante's own death. From internal allusions (such as Clement's death, April 20th, 1314, in *Inf.* xix. 79; the failure of Henry vii, in *Purg.* vii. 96; the pontificate of John xxi, in *Par.* xxvii. 58), together with the evidence already mentioned of the Eclogues and Boccaccio's story of the finding of the last

thirteen cantos, it would seem that the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* were finished between 1314 and 1318 or 1319, the *Paradiso* between 1316 and September 14th, 1321. Dante is in the position of a man who is now relating to the world the vision vouchsafed to him nearly twenty years before. Hence everything that happened after April, 1300, is spoken of as future and by way of prophecy, beginning with Ciacco's account in *Inf.* vi. of the famous faction fight of May Day in that year. With two exceptions—Fra Alberigo and Branca d'Oria (*Inf.* xxxiii.), whose souls went down to Hell before their bodies died—every spirit met with in the ecstatic pilgrimage died before April 1300. But Dante anticipates the certain damnation of some who, though living in 1300, were dead when he wrote the poem; Corso Donati, Popes Boniface and Clement, and a few less notorious sinners as Carlino de' Pazzi.

**Time.**—Dante's conferences with the dead open at sunrise on Good Friday, in his thirty-fifth year. He would impress upon us that his visionary world is no mere dream-land, but a terrible reality, and therefore his indications of time are frequent and precise. For poetical purposes he seems to represent this Good Friday as an ideal Good Friday, March 25th, which was believed to have been the actual date of the Crucifixion on the thirty-fourth anniversary of the Annunciation (cf. *Inf.* xxi. 112, and the 'three months' from Christmas Day in *Purg.* ii. 98). In reality, it fell upon April 8th in 1300; and, when Dante in his pilgrimage through Hell would mark the time by reference to moon and stars, he perhaps has recourse to the ecclesiastical calendar, in which the Paschal full moon was on Thursday, April 7th (see Dr. Moore's *Time-References in the Divine Comedy*):—

‘E già iernotte fu la luna tonda,’

‘And already yesternight the moon was round’ (*Inf.* xx. 127); the night of Maundy Thursday, that he has passed ‘so piteously’ when the poem opens.

2. *The Inferno*

**Cantos I. and II.**—At break of day on Good Friday, Dante, in his thirty-fifth year, after a night of agonised wanderings, would fain issue from the dark wood into which he has, as it were in slumber, strayed. This tangled forest represents at once his own unworthy life and the corruption of human society; both the ‘sin of the speaker’ (§ 28) and the ‘state of misery of those living in this life’ (§ 15) of the Epistle to Can Grande. He would climb the Holy Hill, whose summit has caught the first rays of the sun, the state of felicity, the mountain of the Lord, to which only the innocent in hands and the clean of heart shall ascend. But he is impeded by a swift and beautiful panther; terrified by a lion; driven back by a hideous she-wolf. The earliest view of these three beasts remains the most probable, according to which they symbolise Luxury in its mediæval sense, Pride, Avarice or Cupidity in its widest meaning. The political interpreters, while not altogether excluding the moral symbolism, see in the tangled forest the political state of Italy, and in the beasts the three great Guelf powers that opposed the Empire—the republic of Florence, the royal house of France, the secular power of the Papacy. Although this interpretation is comparatively modern, there are germs of it to be found in the early commentators.

From this peril Dante is delivered by the spirit of Virgil, who bids him take another way. The power of the wolf will extend until the *Veltro* or greyhound comes, who will deliver Italy and hunt the wolf back to Hell. The advent of this Deliverer is mysteriously announced (*Inf.* i. 100-111), and seems to be repeated in other forms at intervals throughout the poem (*Purg.* xx. 10-15, xxxiii. 37-45; *Par.* xxvii. 61-63). Of the innumerable explanations offered, the most plausible is that Virgil refers to a future Emperor who should restore the imperial power, make Roman law obeyed throughout Italy and extirpate greed, establish



universal peace and reform the world. This is strikingly confirmed by comparing the tone of the prophecy with the *De Monarchia* and the language used by Dante in his letters. At the same time, there may be a remoter reference to the second coming of Christ. This double prophecy would have a certain fitness upon the lips of Virgil, who was believed to have sung mystically of the first coming of Christ in the Fourth Eclogue (cf. *Purg.* xxii. 64-73) as well as of the foundation of Rome and her Empire in the *Æneid*. Many commentators suppose that some definite person is referred to; of the various claimants to this honour Can Grande is the only one whose acceptance does not do violence to the chronology of the *Divina Commedia*.

Human Philosophy can lead man from moral unworthiness and guide him to temporal felicity; there are judgments of God to which human reason can attain. Therefore Virgil will guide Dante through Hell and Purgatory, that he may understand the nature of sin and the need of penance to fill up the void in the moral order; after which a worthier soul will lead him to Paradise and the contemplation of celestial things. Dante's sense of unworthiness keeps him back, until he learns that Virgil is but the emissary of Beatrice, to whom in turn Lucia (St. Lucy) has been sent to Dante's aid by a noble Lady in Heaven—evidently the Blessed Virgin Mary, who may not be named in Hell, and who symbolises Divine Mercy, as Lucia does illuminating Grace. Thus encouraged, Dante follows his guide and master upon 'the arduous and savage way.' Æneas had been vouchsafed his descent to the shades to learn things that were the cause of the foundation of the Empire and the establishment of the Papacy (*Inf.* ii. 20-27); Dante shall learn things which may prepare men's hearts for the restoration of the imperial throne, and the cleansing of the papal mantle from the mire of temporal things. St. Paul had been rapt into Heaven 'to bring confirmation of that Faith which is the entrance to the way of salvation' (*ibid.* 29-30); Dante shall follow him to lead

men back to the first purity of that Faith, from which they have wandered.

**Ante-Hell.**—It is nightfall on Good Friday when Dante reads the terrible inscription on the infernal portal (*Inf.* iii. 1-9): 'Leave all hope, ye that enter.' The sense of its famous sentence is hard to him, but Virgil gently leads him in. In the dark plain of Ante-Hell, disdained alike by Mercy and by Justice, are those 'who lived without blame and without praise,' mingled with the Angels who kept neutral between God and Lucifer. Those who through cowardice, taking no side in the struggle between good and evil, would follow no standard on earth, now rush for all eternity after a banner, 'which whirling ran so quickly that it seemed to scorn all pause.' Further on towards the centre, flowing round the mouth of Hell itself, is Acheron; where the souls of the lost assemble, and are conveyed across by Charon in his boat. Unconsciously borne across, Dante with Virgil now stands on the verge of the abyss, hearkening to the gathering thunder of infinite weepings.

**Structure and Moral Topography of Hell.**—Hell is a vast pit or funnel piercing down to the centre of the earth, formed when Lucifer and his Angels were hurled down from Heaven. It lies beneath the inhabited world, whose centre is Jerusalem and Mount Calvary; its base towards the earth, and its apex at the centre. It is divided into nine concentric circles, the lower of which are separated by immense precipices—circles which grow more narrow in circumference, more intense and horrible in suffering, until the last is reached where Lucifer is fixed in the ice at the earth's centre, at the furthest point from God, gazing upwards in defiance towards Jerusalem, where his power was overthrown at the Cross (cf. *Inf.* xxxiv. 106-126).

'There are two elements in sin,' writes St. Thomas Aquinas: 'the conversion to a perishable good, which is the material element in sin; and the aversion from the imperishable good, which is the formal and completing element of sin.' In Dante's Purgatory the material element

is purged away. In his Hell sin is considered mainly on the side of this formal element, its aversion from the Supreme Good; and its enormity is revealed in the hideousness of its effects. The ethical system of the *Inferno*, as set forth in Canto xi., corresponds to Aristotle's threefold division of things to be morally avoided: Incontinence, Bestiality, Malice. Dante equates Bestiality and Malice with the Ciceronian Violence and Fraud, by which injury is done. Thus there is the upper Hell of sins proceeding from the irrational part of the soul, divided into five circles. The lower Hell of Bestiality and Malice is the terrible city of Dis, the true kingdom of Lucifer, in which, after the intermediate sixth circle, come three great circles, each divided into a number of sub-divisions, and each separated by a chasm from the one above; the seventh circle of Violence and Bestiality; followed by two circles of Malice—the eighth of simple fraud, and the ninth of treachery. There is much dispute as to how far Dante further equates this division with the seven capital sins recognised by the Church. Although actual deeds are considered in Hell, rather than the sinful propensities which lead to them, it seems plausible to recognise in Incontinence the five lesser capital sins: Luxury, Gluttony, Avarice, Sloth (though the treatment of this vice in the *Inferno* is questionable), and Anger; and to regard the whole of the three circles of the city of Dis as proceeding from and being the visible effects of Envy and Pride, the sins proper to devils according to St. Thomas,—seen in their supreme degree in him whose pride made him rebel against his Maker, and whose envy brought death into the world.

**Limbo.**—In 'the first circle that girds the abyss,' Dante sees in Limbo the unbaptized children and the virtuous heathen; without hope, they live in desire; free from physical torment, they suffer the pain of loss. Here Dante differs from Aquinas, who distinguishes the Limbo of the Fathers from the Limbo of the Infants, and who represents unbaptized children as not grieving at all for the loss of the



Beatific Vision, but rather rejoicing in natural perfection and a certain participation of the Divine Goodness. The example of Rhipheus in the *Paradiso* shows that Dante could have saved any of the ancients whom he chose, without any violence to his creed. 'Any one,' says Aquinas, 'can prepare himself for having faith through what is in natural reason; whence it is said that if any one who is born in barbarous nations doth what lieth in him, God will reveal to him what is necessary for salvation, either by internal inspiration or by sending a teacher.' The five great classical poets admit Dante as a sixth. With them he enters the noble castle of Fame, from which the light of wisdom shone upon the pagan world; within are all the wise and virtuous spirits of antiquity, even Aristotle, 'the master of those who know,' whose philosophical authority is for Dante supreme (*Inf.* iv. 131). Here, too, are certain moderns that 'worshipped not God aright;' the Saladin, and Averrhoes 'who made the great comment.'

**Upper Hell.**—Out of Limbo Dante and Virgil descend into the darkness of the second circle, where the carnal sinners are whirled round and round, 'through the nether storm-eddying winds.' At its entrance snarls Minos, a type of the sinner's disordered and terrified conception of Justice. In a lull in the storm, Francesca da Rimini pours forth her piteous story in lines of ineffable pathos (*Inf.* v.). Down again through the third circle of putrid rain and snow, where Cerberus (like the other hellish torturers, merely the effect of the sins, and the sinner's own creation) tortures the gluttonous (*Inf.* vi.), and the fourth, where Plutus, demon god of wealth, guards the avaricious and prodigal, butting at each other for all eternity, Dante is led to the dark waters of Styx, shortly after midnight, as Friday is passing into the early hours of Saturday (*Inf.* vii. 97-99). The marsh of Styx represents the fifth circle. Fixed in the slime below are souls, made visible only by the bubbles from their sobs: 'Sullen were we in the sweet air, that is gladdened by the Sun, carrying lazy smoke within our



hearts: now lie we sullen here in the black mire' (*Inf.* vii. 121-124). These souls are usually identified as the *Accidiosi* or Slothful. The material element in Sloth is lack of charity; the formal element is sadness, the sadness which takes away the spiritual life and withdraws the mind from the Divine Good. Other commentators think that the slothful are placed in the Ante-Hell, and that these sad souls are those guilty of sullen or sulky anger, in contrast to the violent anger of those fiercer spirits who, naked and miry, are rending each other on the surface of the marsh, over which the poets are ferried by Phlegyas, the boatman of Dis, as Charon of Upper Hell. The Florentine, Filippo Argenti, who bandies bitter words with Dante during the passage, connects Anger with Pride (*Inf.* viii. 46) and with Bestiality (*ibid.* 62-63). As Anger leads to violence and fraud for the sake of vengeance, so Phlegyas conveys them to the entrance of the city of Dis, glowing red with eternal fire.

**The City of Dis.**—The gate of the city is defended by fiends, while the Furies appear upon the turrets, girt with greenest hydras and with serpents for hair, calling upon Medusa to come and turn Dante to stone. The Furies are symbols of hopeless remorse, and Medusa of the despair which renders repentance impossible. 'A guilty deed is the death of the soul; but to despair is to go down into hell' (St. Isidore, cf. Virgil's words to Dante, *Inf.* ix. 55-57). Virgil can guard Dante from her, but he cannot open the gates. With the sound of mighty tempest a messenger of Heaven passes the Styx with dry feet, and opens the portal with a little rod; although Benvenuto regards him as Mercury with the caduceus, and some modern commentators as Æneas with the golden bough, it is probably an Angel, akin to those two terrible beings who summon the dead to rise in Luca Signorelli's Last Judgment. Within the gate, round the circuit of the walls and at the same level as the last circle, the sixth circle confines the Heretics and Epicureans in burning

tombs. They seem to hold this intermediate position in accordance with the teaching of St. Thomas that Infidelity, if reduced to one of the capital sins, must be regarded as arising from Pride, but may come also from cupidity or some fleshly illusion; and, from a passage in the *Convivio* (ii. 9), Dante appears to reduce one form of Heresy to Bestiality. Farinata degli Uberti, the Ghibelline hero of Montaperti, heroic even in Hell, rises to address his fellow countryman; and, from the same blazing sepulchre, Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, fondly believing that it is height of genius alone that leads Dante thus scathless through this blind prison, seeks vainly to see his own son Guido with him. Emperor and Pope should lead man to blessedness; but Frederick II and Pope Anastasius are buried here with the rest (*Inf.* x. 119, xi. 8). The horrible stench that rises from the abyss forces Dante to delay his descent; and in the pause Virgil explains the moral structure of Hell, equating the Ciceronian with the Aristotelian division of vice (*Inf.* xi.), as already indicated, and adding a special explanation of how Usury, the breeding of money from money, is a sin against nature, and violence against the Deity.

**Seventh Circle.**—They descend the precipice into the seventh circle, at the entrance to which the Minotaur, emblem of Violence and Bestiality, gnaws himself in bestial rage, on the top of the ruin formed by the earthquake when the Redeemer entered Hell. Since we are now within the Devil's city, fiends begin to appear as torturers, but in this seventh circle they take bestial forms, or forms which are half-bestial and half-human. There are three rounds in this circle. In the first, Phlegethon, the river of boiling blood, the violent against others are immersed to varying depths, and tormented by the Centaurs (*Inf.* xii.). Murderers and tyrants are here; and Benvenuto supposes that the Centaurs are types of their own hireling soldiers, the instruments of their cruelty upon earth. In the second round, the violent against themselves (*Inf.* xiii.) are

punished in the pathless wood of the Harpies; the suicides, imprisoned in trees and preyed upon by these Harpies, are regarded as bestial sinners, because, properly speaking, a man cannot hate himself; the destroyers of their own substance, similarly considered, are hunted by black hell-dogs. Yet in this round is one of the noblest souls in the *Inferno*, Pietro delle Vigne, still defending the memory of the imperial master who caused his death. Enclosed by the wood is a third round, the burning plain (*Inf.* xiv.), where the violent against God are subjected to a slow rain of dilated flakes of fire. Capaneus, the typical blasphemer, is tortured even more by his own fury than by the flaming shower. It is in this round that Dante learns what Virgil tells him is the most notable thing he has yet seen in his pilgrimage (*Inf.* xiv. 88): the infernal rivers are produced by the tears and sins of all human generations since the golden age, and flow from rock to rock down the circles of Hell, back to Lucifer at the earth's core (*ibid.* 103, etc.). 'The tears extorted from the sinners, the blood shed by tyrants and murderers, all the filth of the sinful world, flow down below by secret conduits, and are then transformed into instruments of torment' (Witte). There are few things in literature more poignant than Dante's cry of recognition: *Siete voi qui, Ser Brunetto* (*Inf.* xv. 30), 'Are you here, Ser Brunetto?' Nor is there, perhaps, anything that gives us a more terrible conception of Dante's claim to be the 'preacher of justice,' than the fearful doom he has inflicted upon 'the dear kind paternal image' of the man who had taught him how to make himself eternal, and upon the great Florentine captains and citizens, whose deeds and honoured names he had ever 'rehearsed and heard with affection' (*Inf.* xvi. 58-60). In the last group of this round are the Usurers, 'on the utmost limit of that seventh circle,' where violence passes into fraud (*Inf.* xvii. 43); and it is worthy of note that the poet finds examples of this sin, not among the persecuted Jews, but in the noble houses of Padua and Florence.



**Malebolge.**—A yawning abyss, down which the blood-stained Phlegethon dashes with deafening noise, reaches from the seventh to the eighth circle, Malebolge, the realm of Malice. Lured up by the cord which Dante has girt round him and abandons, Geryon, ‘unclean image of fraud,’ a combination of the mythological monster with the apocalyptic Angel of the bottomless pit, bears Dante and Virgil to the place below. Malebolge is divided into ten valleys, with a gulf in the centre. Since they punish Fraud, *dell’ uom proprio male*, ‘the vice peculiar to man,’ the demon tormentors have usually something of the human form (the serpent torturers of the thieves are an exception) — degraded Angels partaking of humanity’s lowest features. Disgusting though many details of this circle may seem to modern taste, they are only terribly realised images of the sins themselves. Panders and seducers (*Inf.* xviii.), flatterers, simoniacs (xix., Pope Nicholas III), diviners and sorcerers (xx.), barrators or sellers of justice in public offices (xxi. and xxii.), hypocrites (xxiii.), thieves (xxiv. and xxv.), evil counsellors (xxvi. and xxvii.), sowers of scandal and schism (xxviii.), falsifiers of every kind (xxix. and xxx.); —each class occupies one of the ten valleys of Malebolge, and to each is awarded a special form of punishment representing the crime, observing the *contrappasso* (*Inf.* xxviii. 142), the law of retribution. In the meanwhile the sun has risen in the world above, though this makes no difference in Hell where the sun is silent (*Inf.* xx. 124); it is the morning of Holy Saturday for the Church; the bells have been rung again after the silence of Good Friday, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* sung in anticipation of the morrow’s feast — while Dante is rebuking Pope Nicholas for simony, and hearkening to Guido da Montefeltro’s bitter tale of Pope Boniface’s treachery (*Inf.* xxvii.). There are few nobler utterances of mediæval Catholicity than that famous outburst of Dantesque indignation in Canto xix, against the unworthy and simoniacal



holders of the papal chair, though modified by the 'reverence for the Great Keys.' In one instance only does Dante seem in personal danger, and, curiously enough, it is in the valley of the Barrators (*Inf.* xxi. and xxii.), with whose sin his ungrateful countrymen had tried to render him infamous; Virgil himself is almost deceived, that is, Dante's reason is bewildered and his philosophy at fault; but, although hunted as a criminal, not a drop of the boiling pitch lights upon him, nor do the rakes and hooks of the 'Evil-claws' as much as graze his skin. But so repulsive is much of the matter of Malebolge that Dante's own moral sense becomes clouded; in the last valley he listens without disgust, almost with pleasure, to an unsavoury quarrel between the Greek Sinon and the coiner Adam of Brescia (*Inf.* xxx.), until a sharp rebuke from Virgil restores him to himself: *Chè voler ciò udire è bassa voglia*, 'for to wish to hear that is a base desire.'

**Ninth Circle.**—In the centre of Malebolge yawns a huge chasm, like an immense well, where the precipice falls to the ninth and last circle. Like towers round the margin of this pit appear the upper parts of captive Giants, both of Scripture and mythology; Nimrod, Ephialtes, Briareus—the Paladins of the Emperor of Hell defending the last and most secret chamber of his palace. The Giants connect this last circle with Pride (*Purg.* xii. 28-36), as the mention of Cain does with Envy (*Purg.* xiv. 133), and Lucifer himself with both Pride and Envy (*Inf.* vii. 12; *Purg.* xii. 25; *Par.* ix. 129, xix. 46, etc.). Treachery is a gigantic version of fraud, by which 'is forgotten that love which Nature makes, and also that which afterwards is added, giving birth to special trust' (*Inf.* xi. 61-63); hence the guardians of this circle are monstrosities in magnified human shape. Antæus (*Inf.* xxxi.), less guilty, and therefore less fettered than the others, hands Virgil and Dante down into this last circle, where the traitors are eternally consumed in the river Cocytus, which is frozen to a vast dark lake of ice, sloping

down to Lucifer. Nowhere else is Dante so utterly pitiless. Hardly can we recognise the man who had fainted with pity at the story of Francesca (*Inf.* v. 141) in the ruthless inquisitor, who is ready to add to the torture of Bocca degli Abati (*Inf.* xxxii. 97), but will not stretch out his hand to afford a moment's alleviation to Fra Alberigo de' Manfredi (*Inf.* xxxiii. 149).

There are four concentric rings in this ninth circle, increasing in pain as they diminish in circumference. In Caina (*Inf.* xxxii. 58), the treacherous murderers of their kindred are chattering with their teeth like storks. In Antenora (*ibid.* 88), traitors to their country are still more deeply frozen into the ice. Bocca degli Abati, who betrayed the Guelfs to the Ghibellines at Montaperti, is side by side with Buoso da Duera, who, five years later, betrayed the Ghibellines to the lieutenant of Charles of Anjou. Frozen into one hole, Count Ugolino della Gherardesca is gnawing the head of Archbishop Ruggieri of Pisa; and the terror and pity of Dante's lines have made the tale of the dying agonies of the old noble and his children perhaps the most famous thing in the *Commedia*. In Ptolomæa (*Inf.* xxxiii. 124), those who slew treacherously, under mask of hospitality, have only their faces showing above the ice, their tears frozen into a crystalline mask; on earth their bodies oftentimes still seem to live, tenanted by a demon until their time is full, while the soul has already gone down into the ice. In the Judecca are the souls of traitors to their lords and benefactors: 'Already I had come (and with fear I put it into verse) where all the souls were covered, and shone through like straw in glass. Some kept lying; some stand upright, this on its head, and that upon its soles; another, like a bow, bends face to feet' (*Inf.* xxxiv. 10-15); silent and immovable, in agonised and everlasting adoration in the court of the Emperor of the dolorous kingdom, who, gigantic and hideous, 'from mid-breast stood forth out of the ice.' The most radiant of God's Angels has become the source of evil, the symbol of

sin's hideousness. His three faces, red, yellow-white, black, are an infernal parody of the Power, Wisdom, Love of the Blessed Trinity. Under each face are two huge bat-like wings, whose helpless flappings freeze all the lake of Cocytus. Tormented by his teeth and claws are the three arch-traitors; Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Divine Founder of the Church; Brutus and Cassius, who murdered the imperial founder of the Empire.

**Out of the Depths.**—It is the night of Easter Eve in our world (*Inf.* xxxiv. 68) when the poets leave the accursed place. Virgil carries Dante like a child, for man will readily submit himself to the guidance of reason and philosophy when once the nature of sin has been thoroughly comprehended. Down by Lucifer's shaggy sides, they pass the centre of the universe (lines 76-81, 106-111). Virgil turns with Dante completely round (conversion from sin), so that they find themselves in a chasm left at Lucifer's fall, below the opposite hemisphere to that which man inhabits. But here it is morning (lines 96, 105, 118), the morning of Easter Eve of the southern hemisphere, which is twelve hours behind the time of its antipodes.<sup>1</sup> Through this space, opposite to 'the tomb of Beelzebub,' a rivulet descends, bringing the remains of sin that has been purged in Purgatory back to Lucifer. By a strange and arduous way, typical of the persevering struggle out of vice, Dante with his guide mounts upward to the clear air; and, on the shores of Purgatory in the southern hemisphere, they 'issued forth to rebehold the stars.'

Like the Redeemer of mankind, Dante has been dead and buried part of three days, and it is not yet daybreak on Easter Sunday, 'in the end of the Sabbath when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.'

### 3. *The Purgatorio*

**Structure and Allegorical Meaning.**—Purgatory is a steep mountain of surpassing height, on the only land rising

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Moore's *Time-References*.



out of the sea in the southern hemisphere. Like Hell, it was formed when Lucifer and his followers were cast out of Heaven. To escape him the earth rushed up to form this mountain, and left void the cavern through which Dante ascended (*Inf.* xxxiv. 125). It is the exact antipodes of Jerusalem and Mount Calvary, rises beyond atmospheric changes, and is crowned by the Earthly Paradise, scene of man's fall and symbol of blessedness of this life.

In the literal sense the *Purgatorio* is the essential Purgatory of separated spirits, expiating and exercising, paying the debt of temporal punishment that remains after the guilt has been forgiven; purging away the material element of sin, after the formal element has been remitted. In the allegorical sense it represents the moral purgatory of repentant sinners in this world; and has for subject man, by penance and good works, becoming free from the tyranny of vice, attaining to moral and intellectual freedom. Thus it becomes a symbol of the whole life of man from conversion to death; man, no longer sunk in ignorance and sin, as in the *Inferno*; not yet soaring aloft on heights of impassioned contemplation, as in the *Paradiso*; but struggling against difficulties and temptations, making amends for misuse of Free Will, conforming with the practices of the Church, and obeying the imperial authority, until the time comes to pass to the blessedness of another world.

Dante's open-air treatment of Purgatory seems peculiar to him. Very wonderful is the transition from the dark night of Hell to the 'sweet colour of oriental sapphire,' where the star of Love comforts the pilgrim soul, and the four stars of the Southern Cross, which symbolise the cardinal virtues, make all the sky rejoice in their flame—until Easter Day dawns, and from afar the poet 'knew the quivering of the sea' (*Purg.* i. 117). Throughout this second *Cantica* the sun is our guide by day, and at night the stars are over our head; we behold the glory of sunrise and of sunset as upon earth, but with added beauty, for it is attended by celestial songs and the softly beating



wings of angelic presences. Dante spends part of four days, with three nights, in this portion of his pilgrimage; for Purgatory is the symbol of the life of man, and the life of man has four periods. At the end of each day Dante rests and sleeps; before dawn on each day, except the first, a vision prepares him for the work of the day—the work which cannot commence or proceed save in the light of the sun, for man can advance no step in this spiritual expiation without the light of God's grace. But the fourth day does not close, like the other three, in night; for it corresponds to that fourth and last stage of man's life, in which the soul 'returns to God, as to that port whence she set out, when she came to enter upon the sea of this life' (*Conv.* iv. 28).

There are three main divisions of the Mountain. From the shore to the gate of St. Peter is Ante-Purgatory, still subject to atmospheric changes. Within the gate is Purgatory proper, with its seven terraces bounded above by a ring of purifying flames. Thence the way leads up to the Earthly Paradise; for by these purgatorial pains the fall of Adam is repaired, and the soul of man regains the state of innocence.

**Ante-Purgatory.**—In Ante-Purgatory Dante passes Easter Day and the following night. Here the souls of those who died in contumacy of the Church are detained at the foot of the mountain, and may not yet commence the ascent; and the negligent, who deferred their conversion, and who now have to defer their purification, are waiting humbly around the lower slopes. Here purgation has not yet commenced; this is the place 'where time by time is restored' (*Purg.* xxiii. 84).

Upon the face of Cato, the guardian of the shore and mountain, so shines the light of the four mystical stars, that he seems illuminated with the light of the sun of Divine Grace (*Purg.* i. 37-39). Cato, 'the severest champion of true liberty,' 'to kindle the love of liberty in the world, gave proof of how dear he held her by preferring to depart

from life a free man, rather than remain alive bereft of liberty' (*Mon.* ii. 5). He was one of those who 'saw and believed that this end of human life lies only in rigid virtue' (*Conv.* iv. 6). Therefore he is the example man must keep before his eyes in his search for moral liberty, in the life that Purgatory symbolises. In the literal sense, his lofty office of guardian is to serve as his own expiation; he is to wait here upon the shore until all the other redeemed souls are purified, that is, to endure the pain of loss until the Day of Judgment.

At sunrise the white-robed and white-winged Angel of Faith brings the ransomed souls over the ocean from the banks of the Tiber, where the redeemed gather, as the lost do upon the shores of Acheron (*Purg.* ii.). The *in exitu Israel* of their psalm signifies mystically, in Dante's allegory, the passing of the holy soul from the bondage of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory (*Epist.* x. 7). Dante's own song of love on the lips of Casella has peculiar fitness at the entrance of the realm of hope and purgation; for, in the eyes of that mystical lady, of whom Love reasons, is the anticipation of Paradise, and yet she is the example of Humility—the Humility in sign of which Dante has girded himself with a rush (*Canz.* vii.). As they turn towards the ascent, the excommunicated draw near, led by Manfredi; cut off from the body of the Church by the Pontiff's curse, they were reunited to its soul by tardy repentance. Dante would clearly show the difference of God's judgment from that of man. The first soul in Hell was the canonised pope-hermit, whom the world extolled as a perfect type of Christian renunciation, and who died in the odour of sanctity; the first soul of the repentant is the king who died excommunicate, and whose name was tainted with suspicion of incest and parricide: 'Horrible were my sins, but Infinite Goodness has such wide arms that it takes whatever turns back to it' (*Purg.* iii. 121-123).

Through a narrow gap they begin the ascent, which is so hard to commence, but grows ever lighter as man ascends.

Among the negligent through indolence, Belacqua seems as lazy as upon earth (*Purg.* iv.) ; but his laziness is now its own punishment. At mid-day Virgil's swift rebuke (*Purg.* v. 10-15) cures his pupil of one fatal obstacle to following philosophy in the search of moral and intellectual liberty—human respect. Among those cut off by violent deaths is Buonconte da Montefeltro, the story of whose death, in Canto v., is a companion study to the soul's tragedy that agony rings from his father's lips out of the torturing flames of Malebolge (*Inf.* xxvii.). The *lagrimetta* of the dying knight—the 'little tear' that saved his eternal part from the fiend (*Purg.* v. 107)—has become one of the priceless pearls in the treasury of the world's poetry. All these souls ask for prayer and supplication, that their delay may be shortened, and the name of Beatrice on Virgil's lips in explanation urges Dante on, as evening approaches.

**The Valley of the Princes.**—They come to the solitary and lion-like soul of Sordello, whose loving greeting to his Mantuan countryman gives occasion to Dante's superb and famous outburst of Italian patriotism: *Abi serva Italia!* (*Purg.* vi. 76.) His part is very similar to that of Musæus in the *Æneid*, Book vi.; he leads Virgil and Dante to the Valley of the Princes, which corresponds to Elysium, the verdant vale where Æneas met Anchises. Dante probably placed Sordello here on account of his famous poem on the death of Blacatz, a Provençal hero of the thirteenth century, in which he upbraids and derides the kings and princes of Christendom, beginning with Frederick II, and ends with a proud assertion that he will speak the whole truth in spite of the powerful barons whom he may offend. So here, in the Valley of the Princes, where those are detained who neglected some peculiarly lofty mission, or postponed their spiritual welfare to worldly and political cares, Sordello, commencing with the Emperor-elect, Rudolph of Hapsburg (*Purg.* vii. 94), points out the descendants or successors of those whom he had rebuked in the other life. Here, singing together to the Queen of Mercy, the deadliest foes



sit side by side, consoling each other; Rudolph of Hapsburg with Ottocar of Bohemia, Charles of Anjou with Peter of Aragon. On Henry of England, Sordello had been more severe when he lived. After sunset, in the light of three brighter stars, that symbolise the three theological virtues, Dante has pleasant talk with Nino Visconti and Conrad Malaspina (*Purg.* viii.). And, as evening closes in, two golden-haired Angels, green-clad and green-winged, the Angels of Hope with the flaming but blunted swords of justice tempered with mercy, defend the noble souls from the assault of an evil serpent. In the literal sense, this episode seems to mean that souls in Purgatory have not the intrinsic impossibility of sinning that is possessed by the Blessed of Paradise, but are kept absolutely free from any sin by the Divine Providence. In the allegorical sense, the meaning clearly is that the way to moral and intellectual freedom is a hard one, and temptations to fall back in despair are many. The tempter would draw man back from regaining the Earthly Paradise, from which he has once caused his expulsion.

**The Mystic Eagle and the Gate of Purgatory.**—Just before the dawn Dante dreams of a golden eagle snatching him up into the fire (of celestial charity), and, waking when the sun was more than two hours high, finds that St. Lucy has brought him to the Gate of Purgatory. If the Eagle and the saint are to be identified, then the Eagle is the type of Divine Grace; if not, the latter is the spirit, aided by Divine Grace personified in Lucia. The Gate of St. Peter with its three steps, of white marble, exactly mirroring the whole man, of darkest purple cracked in the figure of the Cross, of flaming red porphyry, represents the Sacrament of Penance with its three parts: Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction based upon the love of God. The mournfully robed Angel of Obedience seated on the rock of diamond, with dazzling face and flashing sword, is the Confessor. His silver and gold keys, of judgment and absolution, open the gate to Dante; the seven P's traced



by his sword on Dante's forehead are to be effaced one by one in his ascent (*Purg.* ix.).

**Moral Topography.**—Within the gate is Purgatory proper with its seven terraces, each devoted to the purgation of one of the seven capital sins, 'out of which other vices spring, especially in the way of final causation' (Aquinas). Whereas in the *Inferno* sin was considered in its manifold and multiform effects, in the *Purgatorio* it is regarded in its causes, and all referred to disordered love. The formal element, the aversion from the imperishable good, which is the essence of Hell, has been forgiven; the material element, the conversion to the good that perishes, the disordered love, is now to be purged from the soul. In the allegorical or moral sense, since every agent acts from some love, it is clear that man's first business in life is to set love in order; and, indeed, the whole moral basis of Dante's Purgatory rests upon a line ascribed to St. Francis of Assisi: *Ordina quest' Amore, O tu che m'ami*; 'Set love in order, thou that lovest me.' In the first three terraces, sins of the spirit are expiated; in the fourth terrace, sloth, which is both spiritual and carnal; in the fifth, sixth, seventh terraces, sins of the flesh. This purgation, which involves both pain of loss for a time and punishment of sense, is effected by turning with fervent love to God and detesting what hinders union with Him. Therefore, at the commencement of each terrace, examples are seen or heard of virtue contrary to the sin, in order to excite the suffering souls to extirpate its very roots; and at the end examples of its result or punishment (the 'bit and bridle'). These examples are chosen with characteristic Dantesque impartiality alike from Scripture and legend or mythology; but in each case an example from the life of the Blessed Virgin is opposed to each deadly sin. At the end of each terrace stands an Angel—personification of one of the virtues opposed to the deadly sins. These seven Angels in their successive apparitions are among the divinest things of beauty in the *Divine Comedy*. It is only when sin is completely purged away

that man can contemplate the exceeding beauty, the 'awful loveliness' of the contrary virtue.

**First Terrace.**—Steep and narrow is the path up to the first terrace, where Pride is purged away (*Purg.* x.). Carved upon the mountain side are fair white marble images of wondrous beauty, setting forth great examples of Humility, anticipating the best features of early Florentine sculpture. Wearily and painfully the souls of the proud pass round, pressed down by terrible weights, reciting a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, for themselves and those they have left on earth. And seldom has the Catholic doctrine of prayer for the dead been more winningly set forth than in Dante's comment (xi. 31-36). A partaker in some degree of their punishment, Dante, all bowed down, goes with these souls; and speaks with Omberto Aldobrandeschi, who is expiating pride of birth, and Oderigi of Gubbio, the miniaturist, who is purifying his soul from pride of intellect. The latter points out the great Ghibelline lord of Siena, Provenzano Salvani, expiating pride of dominion—the sin which turned so many an Italian patriot of the Middle Ages into a tyrant. Figured upon the pavement below their feet are examples of Pride's punishment, like the designs on the pavement of Siena's Duomo (*Purg.* xii.). Noon has passed when the Angel of Humility shows the way up to the next terrace, and with the waving of his wing removes the first P from Dante's forehead. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' celestial voices sing, as, with almost all weariness gone since Pride is expiated, Dante ascends the steep way.

**Second Terrace.**—In the second and narrower circle Envy is purged. Examples of charity, 'courteous invitations to the table of Love,' are cited by invisible spirits flying past. The envious, clothed in haircloth, lean helplessly shoulder to shoulder against the rock, their eyelids sewn up with iron stitching. Sapia of Siena, one of the few women with whom Dante speaks in his journey, tells her history with exceeding pathos (*Purg.* xiii.). Guido del Duca and Rinieri da Calvoli lament with Dante for the

degenerate state of Romagna and Tuscany; envious of others' prosperity on earth, they mourn now for its decline (xiv.). Like peals of thunder the cries of spirits follow each other in citing Envy's punishment. As they go towards the sunset, the dazzling Angel of Fraternal Love removes the mark of Envy: 'Blessed are the merciful,' 'Rejoice thou that conquerest.' As they mount Virgil expounds the difference between material goods, which are diminished by sharing and beget envy, and celestial goods of Paradise, where love and joy increase with every soul that enters; and the communication of infinite good is limited only by the charity of each soul that is made its mirror (*Purg.* xv.).

**Third Terrace.**—On reaching the third terrace where Anger is purged, Dante sees examples of forgiveness in vision. From the black, pungent, and tormenting smoke which envelops the angry, who call upon the Lamb of God for peace and mercy, the Lombard Marco reconciles Free Will with stellar influence, and ascribes the evil condition of Italy and the world to the confusion of the spiritual and temporal power, and the papal usurpation of imperial rights (*Purg.* xvi.). In this terrace Dante again partakes of the pains of the penitent souls. As the sun is setting, he issues from the dark mist, and is roused from the visions of Anger's punishment by the dazzling splendour of the Angel of Peace, who fans away the third P and shows the way up: 'Blessed are the peacemakers who are free from evil wrath.'

**Fourth Terrace.**—The stars are appearing as they reach the fourth terrace, where souls are purged from Sloth; and, just as in the *Inferno* the Aristotelian division of things to be morally shunned was discussed, and the ethical structure of the *Inferno* expounded, in the circle intermediate between Incontinence and Malice (*Inf.* xi.); so, in the *Purgatorio*, a compulsory pause in the terrace intermediate between sins of spirit and sins of flesh is selected by Virgil for his great discourse upon Love, on which is based the moral system of the *Purgatorio* (*Purg.* xvii. 91-139, xviii. 13-75). It



is practically a sermon on the Franciscan text, 'Set Love in order, thou that lovest me'; since in rational beings disordered Love produces the seven deadly vices. Pride, Envy, Anger are regarded as distorted Love; Sloth as defective Love; Avarice, Gluttony, Luxury as excessive Love. Love is the golden net, whereby God draws back to Himself all creatures that He has made, whether inanimate, sensitive, or rational—by the tendencies or inclinations He has given them to make them seek the end for which they are ordered and disposed, according to His Eternal Law. Rational beings alone have Free Will, by which man merits or demerits from the Divine Justice, according as he inclines to good or evil loves. Love's tendency to good is the precious material upon which Free Will acts like the craftsman's hand, to fashion a satyr's mask or a crucifix.

At the end of Virgil's discourse, the slothful rush by at full speed in the moonlight—so full of longing to lose no time through too little love, that the Abbot of San Zeno cannot stop while he answers Virgil's question; those in front cry out examples of alacrity in Mary and Cæsar; those behind chant Sloth's punishment.

**The Siren and the Angel of Zeal.**—Before the dawn of his third day in Purgatory, Dante has in his sleep a marvellous dream of the Siren (sensual seduction, concupiscence of the flesh), from which he is delivered by a holy and alert lady who calls upon Virgil (prevenient grace? reason? the wisdom and prudence of Proverbs vii.?). The Siren is the dream-prelude to the purgation of sins of the flesh, as the Eagle had been to that of sins of the spirit. The sun has risen; and the Angel of Zeal, who seems all wings, cancels the fourth P and shows the way up to the next terrace. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall have their souls lords of consolation.' Sloth is a heaviness and sadness which weighs down the soul, a sadness at spiritual good, to be fought by thinking on spiritual things. Most fitly then do the wings of the Angel of Zeal point upwards, and his words tell of a nobler sorrow, a



mourning which shall be followed by Divine consolation (*Purg.* xix.).

**Fifth Terrace.**—In the fifth terrace, the avaricious and prodigal, whose souls on earth cleaved to the dust, lie face downwards to earth; unable to move hand or foot until the sin of Covetousness is purged away, the sin, which, according to Aquinas, ‘although not absolutely the greatest of sins, yet has in some sense a greater deformity than the rest, since by it the human heart is subjected even to external things.’ Pope Adrian v tells the story of his tardy conversion, and has tender words for his niece Alagia, the wife of Moroello Malaspina. One of the most noteworthy of Dante’s *Veltro* passages follows (*Purg.* xx. 10-15), and seems to imply that, at the time of writing, the Deliverer had not yet been born (*quando verrà?* when will he come?) He is less mysterious now than in the *Inferno*, for he is nearer God, with sight clearer and purified. Here the souls themselves cry out the examples and warnings, by day and night respectively. The soul of Hugh Capet, ‘the root of the evil plant which overshadows all the Christian earth,’ pours forth bitter sarcasm and scathing invective upon all the royal house of France, the great Guelf power that opposed the Empire, oppressed Italy, and wrought scandal in the Church. A monument of poetic infamy is especially raised to Philip the Fair and the three Carlos; and there are few more glorious examples of Christian magnanimity than the burning words in which Dante, distinguishing the man from the office, brands the sacrilege of Anagni, the outrage committed upon him whom Dante held as his own deadliest foe, and yet the unworthy Vicar of Christ. With a mighty earthquake, a universal chorus of *Gloria in Excelsis* from the suffering souls, the poet Statius is liberated and joins Dante and Virgil (*Purg.* xxi.). He explains how the pains of Purgatory are voluntarily endured, since, against the hypothetic or absolute will with which they desire the bliss of Paradise, the souls suffer these purifying pains with the conditional or actual will, the same inclination or impulse or desire (*talento*)

which they formerly had to sin. Their wills alone show them when purification is complete. The delicious scene of the recognition of Virgil by Statius is full of that peculiarly tender Dantesque playfulness that informs the two Eclogues; Dante's delicate fun with those he loved is one of the most lovable sides of his character, and one perhaps often missed.

**Sixth Terrace.**—The Angel of Justice has removed the fifth P from Dante's forehead, opposing in his song the thirst of Justice to that of gain. As they mount, Statius explains to Virgil how he was converted from prodigality by a line in the *Æneid*, and led to Christianity by the Fourth Eclogue (*Purg.* xxii.). So Dante had cried to Virgil for aid against the Wolf, and had possibly heard from his lips, at the very opening of the poem which represents his own conversion, a mysterious prophecy of Christ's second coming. The poets pursue their way with greater confidence now that Statius is with them, and reach the sixth terrace, where unseen spirits cry out examples of temperance from the tree beneath which drunkenness and gluttony are purged. The spirits, terribly wasted, suffer most intense torments of hunger and thirst in the presence of most tempting food and drink; but the sanctifying pain is a solace, desired even as Christ willed to die for man. With the soul of Forese Donati, Dante holds loving converse; the memory of their dissolute lives together is still grievous; and Dante makes amends for his old slander of Forese's wife Nella, by the 'powerful rhyme' that 'not marble nor the gilded monuments of princes shall outlive' (*Purg.* xxiii. 85-93). Forese darkly foretells the death of Corso Donati, in what seems to be the only direct reference to the 'baron' in the *Divine Comedy* (xxiv. 82-90). Whatever Dante and Forese's friendship had been on earth, it was fair and lovely indeed on the Mount of Purgation.

Amongst many others are Pope Martin iv and the poet Bonagiunta of Lucca, whose talk with Dante upon the

*dolce stil nuovo*, the 'sweet new style,' is one of the landmarks for the student of poetry (*Purg.* xxiv. 49-60). Dante's famous definition of his own position expresses, in another form, the truth that all great poetry is the 'transfigured life' of its author:<sup>1</sup> 'I am one who, when Love inspires me, note; and, in that way which he dictates within, go signifying.'

**The Seventh Terrace.**—Passing another tree, a shoot from the tree of knowledge, beneath which the purging pangs are renewed, and from whose branches spirit-voices proclaim examples of gluttony's punishment, they are summoned upwards by the glowing and dazzling Angel of Abstinence, fragrant with grass and flowers as the air of May. As they ascend the narrow stairs towards the last terrace, Statius explains the generation of the body and the infusion of the rational soul, which exists, after the body's death, invested with an aerial body as a shade (*Purg.* xxv. 31, etc.). Apparently it is because revelation has some voice in these high matters that the Christian Statius gives Dante this exposition, instead of Virgil, and at the latter's request; until the seventh terrace is reached, where sensual passion is expiated in the bosom of the great burning. Singing to the God of Supreme Clemency, crying aloud examples of chastity or of lust's punishment, two bands of souls, divided according to the nature of their sin, pass through the fire in opposite ways (*Purg.* xxvi.). Here is Guido Guinicelli of Bologna, the master of the *dolce stil nuovo*, whom Dante greets in almost an ecstasy of love and admiration, and who was indeed to Dante what, in the history of the plastic arts, Luca Signorelli was to Michael Angelo. Here, too, is Arnaldo Daniello, the cunning Provençal song-smith, who created the sestina, and who, through Dante and Petrarch, exercised a peculiar influence upon the external form of the lyrical poetry of the fourteenth and later centuries.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sonnets 60 and 61 of *The House of Life*.



**The Purging Fire.**—At sunset the Angel of Chastity, singing ‘Blessed are the clean of heart,’ bids the poets pass through the flames that lie between them and the last stairway—the purging fire that is the wall between Dante and Beatrice. Dante endures the ‘burning without measure’; and they reach the ascent, greeted by dazzling light and celestial strains of *Venite benedicti Patris mei*. The Cherubims with the flaming sword, ‘turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life’ (Gen. iii. 24), are thus welcoming man’s restoration to the Garden of Eden, as the serpent had endeavoured to impede it in the Valley of the Princes. Now it is a delight to mount; but night comes on, and Dante, watched over by Statius and Virgil, falls asleep on the stairs (*Purg.* xxvii.).

**Leah and Liberty.**—Just before dawn, prelude to the new day, he dreams of Leah, a young and lovely lady gathering flowers in a meadow—type of the active life, as Rachel, her sister, of the contemplative. Now that the Earthly Paradise has been reached, which represents blessedness of this life, the natural powers can be exercised in action and contemplation (‘blessedness of this life, which consists in exercise of man’s proper power,’ *Mon.* iii. 16); but especially in the active life, which alone can be perfected out of the Celestial Paradise. At sunrise this liberty is confirmed when the topmost stair is reached, and Virgil, who can himself discern no further, resigns his guidance at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Dante’s judgment has been made free, right, and whole. *Perch’ io te sopra te corono e mitrio*, ‘wherefore I crown and mitre thee over thyself’ (xxvii. 142). Those who see in Virgil the imperial authority suppose that he is resigning to Dante the crown and mitre of the Emperor; *mitratus et coronatus* was the expression used for the coronation of an Emperor when the Pope placed upon his head a mitre and a crown, which afterwards were united in the mitred crown, as seen in the great fresco at Santa Maria Novella. Others refer the crown to temporal or imperial authority, and the mitre to



spiritual or ecclesiastical, since (*Mon.* iii. 4) 'if man had remained in the state of innocence in which he was made by God, he would have had no need of such directive regimens,' which are 'remedial against the infirmity of sin.' And Dante, purified from sin, has regained this state of innocence.

**Matilda and the Earthly Paradise.**—In this Earthly Paradise, the music of whose birds and trees has surely passed into the wonderful six cantos that close the *Purgatorio*, Dante meets, amidst the flowers on Lethe's banks, the glorified realisation of the Leah of his dream (*Purg.* xxviii.). She represents the active life of the new law in the state of Eden, realising in the Church of Christ what Leah had dimly prefigured in the Old Testament; the glorified active life; *innocentia bonorum operum*, the virtuous use of earthly things, directly ordered to the love of our neighbour. Presently she is called Matilda (xxxiii. 119). All the earliest commentators, excepting the *Ottimo*, identify her with the great Countess of Tuscany. She certainly bears more resemblance to the maidens of the *Vita Nuova*; above all, to that lady of very sweet speech who had rebuked Dante at the crisis of his 'new life.' But in support of the older view, it may be observed that her counterpart, as Rachel to Leah, is not Beatrice, as sometimes supposed, but St. Bernard, in the closing cantos of the *Paradiso*. Perhaps the last six verses of the Psalm *Delectasti* (Ps. 92, 91 Vulgate), which she quotes, may 'render light' to explain why Dante has transformed the stern heroine of Canossa into this dainty Botticellian girl, whose discourse of Eden and its rivers communicates to Virgil and Statius her own celestial joy: 'For thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings: and in the works of Thy hands I shall rejoice.' She points out to Dante's gaze the wondrous pageant, which astonishes Virgil as much as his pupil, the mystical procession that represents the triumphal march of the Church (*Purg.* xxix.).

**The Pageant of the Church.**—With brilliant light and

ineffable melody, the triumph advances: 'I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband' (Rev. xxi.). Headed by seven candlesticks of gold as standards, followed by the twenty-four elders, white-robed and crowned with lilies, singing Mary's praises; between the four living creatures of Ezekiel and St. John, crowned with green, comes a triumphal chariot, more glorious than the sun, upon two wheels; drawn by a Griffin, half-lion and half-eagle, whose golden wings stretch up far out of sight, through the seven luminous bands that form the processional canopy. By the right wheel dance three maidens, symbolical of the theological virtues; by the left wheel dance four, who represent the cardinal virtues, following the measure of Prudence, as the others take their step from the song of Charity. The seven candlesticks are the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the twenty-four elders, either the patriarchs and prophets, or the books of the Old Testament; the four living creatures, the four Evangelists, or their four Gospels; the Griffin, Christ Himself in His Human and Divine Natures. Lastly, follow seven more elders, white-robed but crowned with flaming red flowers; a physician, and one with shining sword; four of humble appearance; an old man 'sleeping with face alert.' According to Benvenuto da Imola, these represent St. Peter (who had intrusted to him the power of healing souls) and St. Paul, the four great Latin doctors, and St. Bernard. More usually they are regarded as personifying the books of the New Testament—the Acts, St. Paul's Epistles, the Epistles of St. Peter, James, John, and Jude, the Apocalypse or Revelation of St. John. Upon the chariot, amidst a hundred Angels singing and scattering flowers, Beatrice appears, clad in the mystical colours, red, white, green, crowned with the olive of wisdom and of peace over her snow-white veil. And, at the advent of the Wisdom divinely revealed to man, Virgil silently vanishes; he has tasted of the delights of the Earthly Paradise, has witnessed the triumph of the Church from which he is for

ever cut off, the Faith he never knew, and has gone back to his mournful dwelling-place (*Purg.* xxx.).

**Beatrice and Dante.**—The precise significance of the reproaches which Beatrice pours upon Dante for his mode of life after her death, with the poet's own bitter shame and intense repentance (xxx., xxxi.), depends upon the view taken of his character and the nature of the backslidings represented in the dark wood. The theory that these aberrations are entirely philosophical and intellectual, if supported by a rather perplexing reference to the 'school' which Dante has followed (*Purg.* xxxiii. 85), seems contradicted by every page of the *Convivio*, in which those aberrations would naturally find expression. It is most probable that the Cherubically inspired singer of righteousness is deliberately casting aside the allegorical veil which, in the *Convivio*, he had attempted to throw over the things in the past which still severed him from the ideal life when he wrote: 'I fear the infamy of having followed such great passion.' Be these aberrations what they may, his repentance is complete, and Matilda draws him through Lethe with its *tre passi* (contrition, confession, satisfaction?); after which the four cardinal virtues, which 'perfect the intellect and appetite of man according to the capacity of human nature,' lead him to the breast of the mystic Griffin; and, in response to the song of the three theological virtues, which perfect man supernaturally, Beatrice at last unveils her countenance to Dante's gaze: 'O splendour of living light eternal.'

**Concluding Allegories of the Purgatorio.**—In the light of this revelation, now that he is purified and free from sin, Dante beholds a vision of the Church and Empire (*Purg.* xxxii.). That glorious procession had first presented an ideal of the Church as Divine Providence intended it to be, before it became the vessel that the serpent of simony broke; the Bride that the Divine Spouse intended for the guidance of the world. Such being the ideal, Dante beholds in a series of allegorical visions its history, in conjunction with the Empire, from the first coming to Rome down to



the transference of the papal chair to Avignon. The great procession moves on through the Divine forest, the Griffin still drawing the chariot with Beatrice seated upon it; Matilda with Dante and Statius following after the right wheel. Just as the Divine origin of the Church has been seen in the triumphal car, so now the Divine origin of the Empire is indicated in the desolate and despoiled tree which they reach—the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, which, since the prohibition to eat of that tree was the beginning of law and of the duty of obedience, has become the origin of temporal power, the symbol of the Empire and of the obedience due to it. The Empire is bare and destitute of virtue till the Griffin comes to it, who plucks nothing from it: ‘Thus is preserved the seed of all justice’ (*Purg.* xxxii. 48; cf. our Lord’s words to St. John in Matt. iii.). Justice can alone be fulfilled when the Church follows this example of her Divine Founder, and usurps none of the temporal rights of the Empire. He binds the chariot to the tree by its pole, which was made of its wood; the Cross (which according to legend was made from the tree of Eden) is the bond of union of the Roman Empire and the Church; and the desolate tree breaks out into purple leaves and flowers. The Griffin and his train return to Heaven, leaving Beatrice to guard the chariot of the Church, seated beneath the shadow of the Imperial Tree, upon its root, which is Rome. In a new series of visions Dante beholds the sequel; he sees the conflict of the past, contemplates the corruption of the present, hearkens to the hope of the future. The persecution of the Church by the early Roman Emperors is followed by the inroad of early heresies; and the donation of Constantine by the rising of the dragon of schism or simony. By more assumption of secular power and dignities, the chariot becomes monstrously transformed, and shamelessly usurped by the harlot, who represents the corrupt ecclesiastical authority enthroned where Beatrice should be, or a false and degraded theology based upon the Decretals instead of the true Divine science of the



Scripture and the Fathers. By her side a giant appears who, after alternate caressing and scourging of the usurper, unbinds the transfigured chariot from the tree and drags it away through the forest—symbolical of the interference of the royal house of France, ending in the transference of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon.

**A Deliverer announced.**—But to the mournful psalm that the maidens round her raise, *Deus venerunt gentes*, Beatrice answers in words of hope; ‘a little while,’ and the spiritual guide shall rise again from the black tomb of Avignon. And, as they move on, she utters to Dante a further prophecy (*Purg.* xxxiii.). ‘The vessel that the serpent broke was and is not,’ so completely has corruption and simony degraded the chariot of the Bride of Christ. But vengeance shall fall upon the guilty parties, and the eagle shall not for ever be without an heir; for already a favourable disposition of the stars is at hand, under which a messenger of God shall come, who shall slay the harlot and the giant. It is probably the same event as the coming of the Veltro. Dante is to repeat her words ‘to those that live the life which is a running to death,’ and not to conceal what he has seen of the Plant. Apparently (*Purg.* xxxiii. 58-72) he is to make manifest that the Empire is of Divine origin, and to recognise that the precept given by God to our first parents corresponds now with the duty and obedience man owes to the Empire; whoever strives to usurp the imperial prerogatives sins against God, even as Adam sinned in eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree.<sup>1</sup>

**Lethe and Eunoë.**—At noon they come to where the rivers of Lethe and Eunoë issue from one mystical fountain, the fountain of the Grace of God. Here Beatrice refers Dante to Matilda, who leads Dante and Statius to drink of Eunoë, which quickens dead virtue and restores memory of every good deed in those who have first been bathed in

<sup>1</sup> For the closing allegories of the *Purgatorio*, cf. Döllinger's essay on ‘Dante as a Prophet’ (*Studies in European History*) and Appendix B of Mr. Butler's *Purgatory*.

Lethe, which takes away the memory of sin. According to St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa*, iii. 89, 5), works done in charity, although in a sense dead through sin, are brought to life through penance. Through repentance they regain their efficacy of leading him who did them into eternal life. Therefore Dante writes: 'I returned from the most holy wave, remade even as young trees renewed with new foliage, pure and disposed to ascend to the stars.'

#### 4. *The Paradiso*

**Structure.** — Dante's Paradise consists of the nine moving heavens, according to Ptolemaic astronomy, crowned by the tenth motionless and divinest Empyrean heaven, 'according to what Holy Church teacheth, who cannot lie' (*Conv.* ii. 3, 4). The nine moving spheres revolve round our globe, the fixed centre of the Universe, each of the lower eight being enclosed in the sphere above itself. The seven lowest are the heavens of the planets: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. The eighth or stellar heaven, the sphere of the Fixed Stars or Firmament, is the highest visible region of the celestial world, and to some extent corresponds to the Earthly Paradise in the lower realms. Above this visible firmament, the ninth or crystalline heaven, the *Primum Mobile*, directs with its movements the daily revolution of all the others. In it Nature starts; from it proceed time and motion, with all celestial influence for the government of the world (*Par.* xxvii. 115, etc.). It is 'the royal mantle of all the volumes of the world, which is most fervent and most living in God's breath and in His ways' (*Par.* xxiii. 112-114); and it communicates in different degrees some participation in this quickening breath of God to the other spheres which it encloses, and to all the Universe. It moves swiftest of all, from the fervent desire of all its parts to be united to the Empyrean, the spaceless and motionless ocean of Divine love, where

God beatifies the saints and Angels in the Vision of His Essence. This Empyrean is the true intellectual Paradise, for which the lower heavens are merely sensible preparations. 'This is the sovereign edifice of the world, in which all the world is included, and beyond which is nothing; and it is not in space, but was formed only in the First Mind' (*Conv.* ii. 4); 'The heaven that is pure light, light intellectual full of love, love of true good full of joy, joy that transcendeth every sweetness' (*Par.* xxx. 40-42).

**Gradations.**—Each of the nine lower spheres represents a step higher in knowledge, in love, in blessedness, until in the true Paradise the soul attains to perfect knowledge, supreme love, and infinite blessedness in union with the First Cause, in the Beatific Vision of the Divine Essence. The ascent is marked by the increased loveliness of Beatrice, as she guides Dante upwards from heaven to heaven; it is marked, too, by gradations in the brilliancy of the blessed spirits themselves, by their ever increasing ardour of charity towards the poet, and by the growing spirituality of the matters discussed in each sphere—veil after veil being drawn aside from the mysteries of the Divine treasure-house.

**The Saints.**—'To show forth the glory of beatitude in these souls,' says the letter to Can Grande; 'from them, as from those who see all truth, many things will be sought which have great utility and delight' (*Epist.* x. 33). All the saints without exception have their home and glorious seats with Mary and the Angels in that Empyrean heaven, where they are finally seen as glorified spirit-likenesses of what they were on earth. But into each preparatory sphere, excepting the ninth, these citizens of eternal life descend to meet Dante as, with Beatrice, he approaches the gates of the celestial city—like the noble soul returning home to God in the fourth and last part of life:—

'And as his fellow citizens come forth to meet him who returns from a long journey, even before he enters the gate



of his city; so to the noble soul come forth the citizens of the eternal life. And thus do they by reason of her good works and contemplations; for, being now rendered to God and abstracted from worldly things and thoughts, she seems to see those who she believes are with God' (*Conv.* iv. 28).

In the three lower heavens, to which earth's shadow was supposed to extend (*Par.* ix. 118, 119), appear the souls of those whose lives were marred by inconstancy in their vows, by ambitious vainglory, by sensual love. They descend into these lower spheres to give Dante a sensible sign of the lesser degree of the perfection of their beatitude in the Empyrean. *Domus est una, sed diversitas est ibi mansionum*; 'The house is one, but there is a diversity of mansions there.' There are different mansions of beatitude in God's house, proceeding from inequality in the soul's capacity of the Divine Charity; but in that house all are fulfilled with the Vision of the Divine Essence, and each perfectly beatified according to his own capacity of love and knowledge. In the spheres of the four higher planets appear the souls of great teachers and doctors, of Jewish warriors and Christian knights, of just rulers, of ascetic monks and hermits; they appear as types of lives perfected in action or in contemplation, as a sign of the different ways in which perfection may be reached on earth and beatitude attained in Paradise. And it would appear that in each case, after their errand of celestial charity towards Dante has been accomplished, the souls return at once to their proper places in the Empyrean. In the eighth and ninth spheres Dante beholds, still under sensible figures and allegorical veils, the triumph of Christ and the function of the Angelic Hierarchies: anticipatory visions, setting forth the work of redemption and the influence of the celestial intelligences. In all these spheres, excepting the first, and to some extent the second, the spirits of the blessed appear clothed in dazzling light, which hides their proper semblances from Dante's gaze, making



them appear as brilliant stars or flaming splendours. In the tenth Heaven of Heavens he is supernaturally illumined, and enabled thereby to behold them in their glorified spirit forms 'with countenance unveiled' (*Par.* xxii. 60, xxx. 96, xxxi. 49).

**The Angels.**—Each of the nine moving spheres is assigned to the care of one of the nine Angelic orders: Angels, Archangels, Principalities; Powers, Virtues, Dominations; Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim. And the character of the blessed spirits that appear to Dante in each sphere, as also the matters discussed in each, seem in almost every case to correspond more or less closely with the functions assigned by mystical theologians, especially the pseudo-Dionysius and St. Bernard, to the special Angelic order which presides over the sphere in which they appear.<sup>1</sup> It is through these Angels (the name is applied generally to all, as well as to the lowest order) that God disposes the visible world; in the hands of the celestial intelligences the heavens are as hammers, to stamp the Divine ideas upon material creation and carry out the Divine plan in the government of the Universe (cf. *Par.* ii. 127-129). And, by means of the influence of the stars, these Angels have impressed certain men with their own peculiar virtues; perhaps to fill up the vacant places in their ranks left by the fall of Lucifer's followers, certainly to co-operate on earth in their work. Dante himself was born beneath the constellation of the Gemini, the glorious stars impregnated with the virtue of the Cherubim who rule the eighth sphere (*Par.* xxii. 112-123). The Cherubim represent God's Wisdom; their name signifies plenitude of knowledge. According to St. Bernard, they 'draw from the very fountain of wisdom, the mouth of the Most High, and pour out the streams of knowledge upon all His citizens.' Their special

<sup>1</sup> The present writer, following the steps of Professor Lubin, has endeavoured to work this out in his *Dante's Ten Heavens*, from which several passages on the *Paradiso* are here repeated.

prerogatives are fulness of Divine light, and contemplation of the beauty of the Divine order of things; they see most into the profound mysteries of the hidden things of God, and spread the knowledge of Him upon all beneath them. By their inspiration Dante co-operated in this Cherubical work by writing the *Divina Commedia*.

**Time in Paradise.**—The action of the *Paradiso* commences at noon, immediately after Dante's return from Eunoë; that is, noon on Wednesday in Easter week in the Earthly Paradise and (the following) midnight at Jerusalem (*Par. i. 37-45*). The time-references in this third Cantica are rather doubtful (*Par. xxii. 151-153, xxvii. 77-87*), but it seems probable that Dante takes twenty-four hours to ascend through the nine material heavens to the Empyrean, which is beyond time and space, where 'the natural law in naught is relevant' (*Par. xxx. 123*). When Dante woke from his 'mighty trance' to the 'sound of the importunate earth,' it was probably about dawn on the morning of Friday in Easter week in our world, thus completing the seven days of his ecstatic pilgrimage, which had commenced at about the same hour on Good Friday.

**Canto I.**—In a superb prologue of stately music (*Par. i. 1-36*), the poet sings of the glory of the First Mover, and prays for light and inspiration to complete this third most arduous portion of his divine poem. Then, in the noblest season of the year and noblest hour of the day, as Beatrice gazes upon the sun and Dante upon her, his mind becomes godlike, and he ascends to Heaven swifter than lightning. To explain his ascent, Beatrice discourses upon the form and order of God's visible image, the Universe; and on His Eternal Law, the sovereign plan of government existing in the Divine Mind, to which all movements and actions of nature are subject (*ibid. 103-141*). To all created things God has given an instinct, or principle of inclination, by which, in different ways according to their nature, He draws them all back to Himself over the great sea of being. Rational beings alone can

resist the order of the Universe and defeat the Eternal Law by sin, which is made up by temporary or eternal suffering, as Dante has seen in the lower realms; but the purified soul, in accordance with this order and Law, inevitably mounts up to find its rest in union with the First Cause.

**The Heaven of the Moon.**—They are received into the eternal pearl of the Moon (*Par. ii.*); where Beatrice first confutes Dante's erroneous theory concerning the uniformity of the celestial bodies, and, by explaining how everything in the visible world depends upon the Angelic movers of the spheres, gives a mystical interpretation of a natural phenomenon, on this first step of Dante's ascent to the suprasensible. Within this eternal pearl appear faint but divinely beautiful forms of women; the souls of those who had yielded to violence and broken their solemn vow (*Par. iii.*). Piccarda Donati, sister of Corso and Forese, sets forth the perfection of celestial charity, where all wills are made absolutely one with the Will of God, who has awarded different degrees or mansions of beatitude to all His chosen ones:—

‘E la sua volontate è nostra pace,’

‘And His will is our peace.’ Transfigured now with ineffable joy, Piccarda tells the pathetic story of her frustrated life on earth; and points out to Dante the Empress Constance, mother of Frederick II, torn, like her, from the convent's shelter. Beatrice explains to Dante the place of all the saints in the Empyrean—the ‘heaven of Humility where Mary is,’ as Dante had sung long before of Beatrice herself (*V. N.*, Sonnet xviii.)—and the reason of this temporary apparition in the moon (*Par. iv.*). The other questions solved in this sphere are all connected with Free Will. Rectitude of will is necessary for the gaining of Paradise, and nothing whatever can take away that freedom of the will. ‘As regards the proper act of the will, no violence can be done to the will’; and, since Piccarda and Con-



stance yielded through fear of greater evil, they fell voluntarily from the state of perfection to which they were called. Freedom of the Will is God's greatest gift to man (*Par.* v. 19-24); hence the sanctity of an accepted vow, wherein this supreme gift is offered to God as victim, although Holy Church has power to commute, save, apparently, in the case of solemn vows of perpetual chastity. It will be observed that this heaven is moved by the Angels, who are severally assigned to individuals as guardians, and who are the bearers of tidings of God's bounty to men; and, corresponding to this, the questions solved relate to the salvation and guidance of individual souls, and to the great gift of liberty, whereby God's bounty is specially shown.

**The Heaven of Mercury.**—In the second sphere, the heaven of Mercury, appear the souls of those who did great things for humanity or for special nations, but who were actuated by mixed motives; personal ambition, desire of fame and honour, made 'the rays of true love mount upwards less vividly' (*Par.* vi. 117); and so they have the next lowest mansion of beatitude to the spirits that appeared in the inconstant Moon. The Emperor Justinian recites the proud history of the Roman Eagle, and shows how Divine Providence established the sway of the Roman people over all the earth, made the Eagle the instrument of the Atonement offered by Christ for all mankind, the avenger of His death, the protector of His Church. And in the eyes of the lawgiver of the Monarchy, who had restored Italy to the Empire and established Roman law—the work which Dante's *Veltro* is to effect under altered conditions of Christendom—both Guelfs and Ghibellines are traitors and sowers of discord. Here, too, is Romeo of Villanova, who did in a lesser degree for Provence what Justinian did for the Empire, thus appearing with him in the sphere that is moved by the Archangels, whose function is to guide and protect particular nations. And, even as the Archangels announce messages of special import and sacredness, as Gabriel did to Mary, so Beatrice explains to Dante the



mystery of man's redemption by the Incarnation and Crucifixion, the supremest work at once of Divine Justice and Divine Mercy (*Par. vii.*), and touches somewhat upon the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

**The Heaven of Venus.**—The third heaven, the sphere of Venus, is moved by the celestial Principalities, whose office is to influence earthly rulers to imitate the principality of God, by uniting love with their lordship. Into this sphere descend the souls of purified lovers, brilliant lights moving circle-wise and hidden in the rays of their own joy. Carlo Martello, son of Charles II of Naples, and son-in-law of Rudolph of Hapsburg, who, by reason of his marriage with Clemenza, might have healed the feuds of Guelfs and Ghibellines, denounces the misgovernment of his own house, and explains the influence of the celestial bodies for the constitution of society and the government of states (*Par. viii.*). That 'modern child of Venus,' Cunizza da Romano, the famous sister of Ezzelino, appears as the type of a perfect penitent (*Par. ix.*). Like her, Folco of Marseilles, poet and prelate, remembers the love sins of his youth, not with sorrow, but with gratitude to the Divine Mercy and wonder at the mysteries of Providence. Rahab of Jericho, the highest spirit of this sphere, is a type of the Church, saved by Christ's blood from the ruin of the world; and, with a fine thrust at the loveless avarice of the Pope and his cardinals, Dante passes with Beatrice beyond the shadow of the earth.

**The Heaven of the Sun.**—To mark this higher grade of bliss and knowledge, Dante pauses on his entrance into the fourth sphere, the heaven of the Sun, to sing again of the Creation, the work of the Blessed Trinity, and the order of the Universe, the visible expression of the perfection of Divine art (*Par. x. 1-21*). The Sun is ruled by the celestial Powers, the Angelic order that represents the Divine majesty and power, combats the powers of darkness, and stays diseases. Here in two circles appear the glorious souls of twenty-four teachers and doctors, who illuminated

the world by example and doctrine—the twofold work of co-operation with the celestial Powers which is seen in its supereminent degree in the lives of St. Francis and St. Dominic, the champions who led the armies of Christ against the powers of darkness and healed the spiritual diseases of the Christian world. St. Thomas Aquinas, the great light of the Dominicans, after naming the other eleven saints of his circle (Albertus Magnus, Gratian, Peter Lombard, Solomon, Dionysius, Orosius, Boethius, Isidore, Bede, Richard of St. Victor, and Sigieri), sings the glorious panegyric of St. Francis, the Seraphic bridegroom of Poverty, laments the backsliding of the Dominicans (*Par.* xi.). St. Bonaventura, once general of the Franciscans, extols the marvellous life of St. Dominic, the Cherubical lover of Faith, the great paladin in Holy Church's victorious battle where St. Francis bore the standard of the Crucified (*Par.* xii.). Lamenting the degenerate state of the Franciscans, he names the eleven saints that accompany him; St. Francis' perfect followers, Illuminato and Agostino; Hugh of St. Victor; Peter Comestor, and Peter of Spain (John xxi, Pope), Nathan, Chrysostom, St. Anselm, Ælius Donatus, Rabanus Maurus, and the Calabrian Abbot Joachim. Each group thus closes with a spirit whose orthodoxy had been at least questioned. Sigieri of Brabant had 'syllogised invidious truths,' and probably met with a violent death at the Papal Court at Orvieto. Joachim of Flora, 'endowed with prophetic spirit,' had fearlessly assailed corruption in high places, and was himself regarded as fairly orthodox; but his later Franciscan followers (from whom, however, Dante seems in several places to dissociate himself) certainly lapsed into heresy, following the steps of the author of the 'Eternal Gospel.'

St. Thomas further explains to Dante the grades of perfection in God's creatures, from the Angels downwards; whereby His Divine light is more or less imperfectly reflected, and the likeness of the Divine ideas more or less perfectly

expressed—perfectly only when the Trinity creates immediately, as in the case of Adam and the humanity of Christ (*Par.* xiii.). Solomon, whose peerless wisdom St. Thomas had explained as ‘royal prudence,’ instructs Dante concerning the splendour of the body after the resurrection, when the perfection of the beatitude of the soul will be completed (*Par.* xiv.). And, in a mysteriously beautiful apparition of what seems to be another garland of spirits in the Sun, this vision of doctors closes; and Beatrice and her lover are ‘translated to more lofty salvation’ in the glowing red of Mars.

**The Heaven of Mars.**—The fifth heaven, the sphere of Mars, is ruled by the Angelic Virtues. According to Dionysius, the Virtues imitate the Divine strength and fortitude, and their name signifies ‘a certain manly and masculine strength in them, and an unconquered and unconquerable valour’ (Colet on Dionysius). Their special function is to make all things in God ‘strongly and manfully valiant in chaste and masculine virtue.’ Christ Himself ‘taught us that true virtue and strength among men was endurance, by enduring gloriously unto death, even the death of the Cross. This becoming weak even to death was the strength and fortitude of God’ (*ibid.*). Therefore, in Mars, Dante beholds a great image of the Crucified, blood-red, formed by stars which are the souls of the warrior saints, whom the Virtues impressed at their birth with the influence of the planet (*Par.* xvii. 76-78), to be strongly and manfully valiant, and to do notable things on earth (*ibid.* 92, 93), even as the Virtues, according to St. Bernard, work signs and prodigies among the elements. It is by means of this Angelic order, *virtutes calorum*, that the Sign of the Son of Man shall appear in Heaven, as foretold in the Gospel.

Cacciaguida passes from the right arm of the Cross to greet his descendant, like Anchises to Æneas in Elysium. In his long discourse with Dante (*Par.* xv. and xvi.) we dimly discern a splendidly ideal picture of a free Italian



commune of the twelfth century, before the corrupting influence of France had fallen upon it, and before the hostility of the Church to the Empire, with the resulting confusion of persons in the city, had involved the Florentines in the feuds of Guelfs and Ghibellines. Then, having bitterly lamented the decay of the old Florentine families and the corruption of their successors, Cacciaguida co-operates with the Virtues by inspiring Dante with endurance and fortitude to suffer unjust exile and perform his life's work (*Par.* xvii.). In the famous and most noble lines, to which reference has already been made in touching upon this epoch of Dante's life, Cacciaguida foretells the poet's banishment, the calumnies of his enemies, his sufferings in exile, his forming a party to himself, the future greatness of Can Grande, Dante's own certainty of eternal fame. And let him be no timid friend to truth, but make manifest his whole vision, and especially assail corruption in highest places (cf. *Mon.* iii. 1). The keynote of the closing years of Dante's life is struck at the opening of Canto xviii.: 'And that Lady who was leading me to God said: Change thy thought; think that I am near to Him who unburdens every wrong.' Gazing upon her, his affection 'was free from every other desire.' Then, with a charge of celestial chivalry across the sky, this vision of warriors closes; Joshua and Judas Maccabæus, Charlemagne and Orlando, William of Aquitaine and Rinoardo, Godfrey de Bouillon and Robert Guiscard, flash through the Cross, and are rejoined by Cacciaguida in their motion and their song.

**The Heaven of Jupiter.**—The silvery white sphere of Jupiter, the sixth heaven, is ruled by the Dominations, the Angelic order who are 'an express image of the true and archetypal dominion in God,' according to Colet's rendering of Dionysius: 'for the dominion in them is simple and unmingled, and devoid of all subjection, ruling over all, useful to all, a true and unmingled liberty of bearing sway after the form and pattern of God.' Their function is to draw all things to imitate this dominion, so that rulers may bear true



lordship in God and men may imitate this dominion by subjection and obedience. This, then, is the sphere of ideal government, the heaven of the planet that effectuates justice upon earth (*Par.* xviii. 115-117). The souls of faithful and just rulers appear as golden lights, singing and flying like celestial birds. They first form the text *Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram*, 'Love justice you that are the judges of the earth' (*Wisdom* i. 1, Vulgate), tracing successively the letters until they rest in the final golden M, the initial letter of Monarchy or Empire—the Empire under which alone can justice be paramount on earth. Next, those higher form the head and neck of an Eagle; while those below first form a lily upon the M, and then peacefully follow the higher spirits in forming one complete imperial Eagle (*Par.* xviii. 100-114). The Guelf powers who follow the standard of the lily must thus submit to the universal Monarchy, the form of government ordained by God, and coming down directly from the fountain of universal authority. In the varied details of these transformations the three great doctrines of the *De Monarchia* are shown step by step: the necessity of the Empire for the well-being of the world, the Roman acquisition of the Monarchy by right, the direct dependence of the imperial authority upon God. And, since justice is obscured and good government rendered abortive by the simony of the pastors of the Church, which leads them to oppose the Empire, Dante has a bitter word in season for the reigning pontiff, John xxii (*Par.* xviii. 130).

In the perfect concord of its component spirits the Eagle, speaking with one voice, discourses upon the immutability and absolute justice of the Divine Will, which is inscrutable and incomprehensible to mortals (*Par.* xix.). Having rebuked the wickedness of all the kings and princes then reigning, from the Emperor-elect (Albert of Austria in 1300) to the King of Cyprus, it sets forth in contrast to them the example of just and righteous monarchs and rulers of olden time, the six noblest of whom now form its eye—David,

Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, the Norman William II of Sicily, and Rhipeus the Trojan (*Par.* xx.). The salvation of Trajan, through the prayers of St. Gregory, and Rhipeus, by internal inspiration concerning the Redeemer to come, unveils yet more wondrous mysteries in the treasury of Divine Justice, which suffers itself to be overcome by hope and love. Rhipeus, the justest among the Trojans and the strictest observer of right (Virgil, *Æn.* ii. 426, 427; *cf.* Acts x. 35), at once solves Dante's difficulty concerning the salvation of the just heathen who die without baptism, and indicates that the race who gave the ancestors to the Roman people was not without Divine light.

**Heaven of Saturn.**—The last of the seven heavens of the planets is the sphere of Saturn, over which the Thrones preside. According to Dionysius, the Thrones represent the Divine Steadfastness; by means of these Angels will God execute His judgments; and their special office is purification. Upon them God sits; by which, according to St. Bernard, is meant supreme tranquillity, most placid serenity, peace which surpasseth all understanding. In Saturn appear the contemplative saints, and the monks who kept firm and steadfast in the cloister. They pass up and down the celestial Ladder of Contemplation (*Par.* xxi. and xxii.), the stairway by which the soul mystically ascends to the consideration of the impenetrable mysteries of God which transcend all reason. In this high stage of progress towards the suprasensible Beatrice does not smile, for Dante's human intellect could not yet sustain it, and the sweet symphonies of Paradise are silent. St. Peter Damian discourses upon the impenetrable mysteries of Divine predestination, and rebukes the vicious and luxurious lives of the great prelates and cardinals. St. Benedict describes the foundation of his own great order, and laments the shameless corruption of contemporary Benedictines. And in this, and, above all, in the cry like thunder which bursts from the contemplatives at the conclusion of Peter Damian's words, threatening the Divine vengeance which

is to fall upon the corrupt pastors of the Church, the saints of the seventh sphere unite themselves with the celestial Thrones, whose office is purification, and who are the mirrors of the terrible judgments of God.

**The Gemini.**—At Beatrice's bidding Dante follows the contemplatives up the celestial ladder, entering the Firmament at the sign of the Gemini or Twins, beneath which he was born (*Par.* xxii. 112, etc.). To his natal stars, or rather to the Cherubim with whose virtue they are animated, Dante appeals for power to complete the work for which they have inspired him. In a momentary vision, with the capacity of his inward soul enlarged, he looks down upon the whole Universe, and estimates aright the relative value of all things in heaven and earth, now that he is prepared to witness the true glories of Paradise.

**The Stellar Heaven.**—The Firmament or stellar heaven, the eighth sphere, is ruled by the Cherubim, who represent the Divine Wisdom; and is the celestial counterpart of the Garden of Eden. Here the fruit of man's redemption is mystically shown in a vision of the triumph of Christ, the new Adam, surrounded by myriads of shining lights which draw their light from Him and represent the souls of the blessed whom He has redeemed (*Par.* xxiii.). After Christ has ascended from this celestial garden, where Mary is the rose and the Apostles the lilies, the Archangel Gabriel descends with ineffable melody and attends upon the new Eve, 'the living garden of delight, wherein the condemnation was annulled and the tree of life planted,'<sup>1</sup> in her Assumption.

The four spheres of the higher planets had set forth a celestial realisation of the four cardinal virtues, Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and Temperance, which perfect man according to the capacity of human nature; now, in this sphere of the Cherubim whose name indicates plenitude of the knowledge of God, Dante is examined upon the three theological virtues, which have God for their object as He

<sup>1</sup> St. John of Damascus on the Assumption.



transcends the knowledge of our reason, and which put man on the way to supernatural happiness. His answers to St. Peter upon Faith (*Par.* xxiv.), to St. James upon Hope (*Par.* xxv.), to St. John upon Charity (*Par.* xxvi.), contain the very essence of the devout wisdom of the schoolmen upon those three Divine gifts, whereby man participates in the Deity and 'ascends to philosophise in that celestial Athens, where Stoics and Peripatetics and Epicureans, by the art of Eternal Truth, concordantly concur in one will' (*Conv.* iii. 14). And all the celestial music cannot quite drown the poet's sigh for that fair Florentine sheepfold, from which he is still barred out, though Hell and Heaven have opened for him their eternal gates! (*Par.* xxv. 1-12). Within a fourth light the soul of Adam appears, to instruct Dante upon the proper cause of his fall and upon his life in the Earthly Paradise, now that the poet has seen the triumph and ascent of the new Adam. Adam, in whom was directly infused all the light lawful to human nature to have (*Par.* xiii. 43), is the last soul that appears to Dante until the consummation of the vision in the Empyrean. On the close of his discourse, a hymn of glory to the Blessed Trinity resounds through Paradise, a laugh of the Universe in joy of the mystery of Redemption (*Par.* xxvii. 1-9). Then, while all Heaven blushes and there is a celestial eclipse as at the Crucifixion, St. Peter utters a terrible denunciation of the scandals and corruption in the Papacy and the Church, wherein Dante certainly makes good the claim he practically asserts for himself, in the Epistle to the Cardinals, of being the Jeremiah of Roman Catholicity.

**The Ninth Heaven.**—When the saints have returned to their places in the Empyrean, Dante, after a last look to earth, passes up with his lady into the ninth sphere, the crystalline heaven. Beatrice discourses upon the order of the heavens and the want of government upon earth, prophesying that, before very long, deliverance and reformation will come, even as St. Peter had announced in the sphere below. Here, where Nature commences, Dante has a



preparatory manifestation of the nine Angelic orders, the ministers of Divine Providence, who ordain and dispose all things by moving the spheres. They appear as nine circles of flame, revolving round an atomic Point of surpassing brilliancy, which symbolises the supreme unity of God: 'From that Point depends Heaven and all Nature' (*Par.* xxviii. 42). Each Angelic circle is swifter and more brilliant as it is nearer to the centre, each Hierarchy striving after the utmost possible assimilation to God and union with Him. Swiftest and brightest of all are the Seraphim, who move this ninth sphere—the Angelic order that represents the Divine Love, and who love most and know most. 'In the Angels,' says Colet on Dionysius, 'an intensity of knowledge is love; a less intense love is knowledge.' The relation of the Seraphim to the Cherubim is that of fire to light; their special office is perfecting, as that of the Cherubim is illumination. All the orders contemplate God, and manifest Him to creatures to draw them to Him. Receiving from God the Divine light and love that makes them like to Him, the higher orders reflect this to the lower, like mirrors reflecting the Divine rays; and these lower orders reflect it to men, so rendering all things, as far as possible to each nature, like to God and in union with Him. After distinguishing between the different orders, according to Dionysius, Beatrice speaks of their creation as especially illustrating the Divine Love, which the Seraphim represent (*Par.* xxix.), and their place in the order of the Universe, the fall of the rebellious, the reward of the faithful, and their almost infinite number. Each Angel belongs to a different species, and each differs from every other in its reception of Divine light and love.

**The Empyrean.**—Dante and Beatrice now issue forth of the last material sphere into the Empyrean, the true Paradise of vision, comprehension, and fruition, where man's will is set at rest in union with universal Good, and his intellect in the possession of universal Truth. And at this point the literal sense and the allegory meet. After the

ideal life of man has been set forth in the seven spheres of the planets, the work of redemption and the influence of the celestial intelligences explained in the eighth and ninth spheres, Dante's blindness on entering this final heaven of pure light—a blindness followed by a new celestial sight and new faculties for comprehending the essence of spiritual things—seems analogous to the passage from mortality to immortality, perhaps an allegory of death itself (*Par.* xxx. 46-60). Like Galahad at the achieving of the Sangreal, 'he began to tremble right hard when the deadly flesh began to behold the spiritual things.' The first empyreal vision is still a foreshadowing preface: a river of light, the stream which makes the city of God joyful, the wondrous flowers of celestial spring, the living sparks of angelic fire. This river of grace Divine is the fountain of wisdom from which, according to Bernard, the Cherubim drink, to pour out the streams of knowledge upon all God's citizens; and of this fountain Dante, too, drinks with his eyes, that he may more fully see the vision of God which he has to relate, to diffuse His knowledge upon earth as the Cherubim do from Heaven.

By the light of glory his mind is rendered capable of seeing those spiritual things which the blessed behold with immediate intuition, and of union with the Divine Essence (*Par.* xxx. 100-102). The river is seen as a circular ocean of light; the saints and Angels appear in their true forms, all united in the sempiternal Rose of Paradise. Even at this height of ecstatic alienation from terrestrial things, Dante can turn in thought to Pope and Emperor who should be leading man to beatitude; a throne is prepared for Henry in this convent of white stoles, while the hell of the Simoniacs is gaping for Boniface and Clement. Beatrice has returned to her throne, her allegorical mission ended; and for this supreme revelation of the Divine beauty in the mystical Rose, where there is no impediment to the Divine light, but ecstatic saints and flying Angels are absorbed in love and vision, her place is taken by St. Bernard, even

as Virgil had been replaced by Matilda. St. Bernard seems to represent the glorified contemplative life in our heavenly country, as Matilda had symbolised the glorified active life in the state of restored Eden; beginning on earth in the speculation of supernal things, it is perfected in Heaven in the immediate intuition of God. In an exquisite lyrical interbreathing Dante addresses Beatrice for the last time, thanking her for having led him from servitude to liberty, praying to her for final perseverance (*Par.* xxxi. 79-90). Under the guidance of Bernard, he prepares himself for the vision of the Divine Essence, by disciplining his spiritual sight in contemplation of the glory of the saints and of the ineffable beauty of Mary, surrounded by her Angels, and clothed, as Bernard himself puts it elsewhere, in the Sun by whose fire the prophet's lips were cleansed and the Cherubim kindled with love.

Throughout the Rose two descending lines divide the redeemed of the old law from the redeemed under the new. The one line passes down from Mary's throne, composed of holy women, ancestresses of Christ or types of His Church: Eve, Rachel, Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, Ruth (*Par.* xxxii.). With Rachel, in the third row, Beatrice is seated. The opposite line passes down from the seat of the Baptist, Christ's precursor; and commences with St. Francis, His closest and most perfect imitator, St. Benedict (in the third row opposite to Rachel and Beatrice), St. Augustine. The lower sections of each half of the Rose are occupied by the little children who died before attaining use of reason; and who yet have different degrees of bliss, according to the inscrutable mysteries of predestination and Divine Justice, which willed to give grace differently to each. Another vision of Mary, the supreme of created things, 'the face that is most like to Christ, whose beauty alone can dispose thee to see Christ' (*Par.* xxxii. 85-87), is the prelude to the vision of the Deity. Before her hovers her chosen knight, Gabriel, the 'strength of God,' the pattern of celestial gallantry, *leggiadria*. Round her are



Adam and St. Peter, Moses and St. John the Divine; opposite the two latter are St. Anne and St. Lucy. Thus the three Ladies who took pity upon Dante in the dark wood, when the mystical journey opened, have been seen in their glory at its close.

**Mary and the Divine Essence.**—And the poet turns finally to the Primal Love, by Mary's grace and Bernard's intercession in that supreme hymn that opens the most wonderful closing canto of the *Commedia*:—

‘Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,’

‘Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son.’ Setting forth her predestination from eternity to bring the Redeemer into the world, her office of love and hope to Heaven and Earth, her infinite excellence and dignity, her power and never-failing love, St. Bernard implores of her grace for Dante to rise to the vision of the Divine Essence now, in ecstatic contemplation, and then for his final perseverance that, on his return to earth, her loving protection may strengthen him against the assaults of passion, until he rejoice once more in the Beatific Vision for all eternity.

In answer to Mary's intercession, the vision is granted to Dante, wherein the last and perfect beatitude of man consists. All ardour of desire dies away. Entering into the Divine Light, uniting his intellectual vision to the Divine Essence, his soul is fulfilled of all blessedness. He beholds the type of all creation, and, as his power of intellectual insight is supernaturally enlarged, he beholds the Creator. He contemplates the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and the union of the Divine to the Human Nature in the Person of the Word—as much of the inscrutable Triune God as may be permitted to any created intellect in the Beatific Vision. The vision ceases, but his desire and will are moving in perfect harmony with the will of God. His mind has attained to its proper end and perfection, united in charity to ‘the Love that moves the Sun and all the stars’ :—

‘L’AMOR CHE MOVE IL SOLE E L’ALTRE STELLE.’



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

[Full bibliographies, on each branch of the literature connected with Dante and his works, will be found in Dr. Scartazzini's *Prolegomeni* (Italian, 1890), *Hand-Buch* (German, 1892), *Dantologia* (Italian, 1894). What follows is merely a selection of what will be found most useful by readers of this *Primer*.]

### A. COMPLETE WORKS : TEXT AND DICTIONARIES

*Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri, nuovamente rivedute nel testo da* Dr. E. Moore. Oxford, 1894 and 1897. (The Oxford Dante.) 7/6 (or, in 3 vols., 10/6).

*Dizionario Dantesco di quanto si contiene nelle Opere di Dante Alighieri, compilato da* D. G. Poletto. 7 vols. Siena.

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## D. THE MINOR WORKS

The *Convivio* or *Convito* was first printed at Florence in 1490. Eighteen *canzoni* (erroneously numbered as fourteen) were published at the end of the Venetian edition of the *Commedia* in November 1491. Fifteen genuine Dantesque *canzoni*, with others wrongly ascribed to him, are contained in a collection printed at Milan and at Venice in 1518. The first partially complete edition of Dante's lyrical poetry is contained in the first four books of *Sonetti e canzoni di diversi antichi autori Toscani in dieci libri raccolte*, edited by Bernardo di Giunta at Florence in 1527. The *Vita Nuova* was first printed at Florence in 1576; but its lyrics had been given in the first book of the 1527 edition of the *Canzoniere*. The *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was published in Trissino's Italian translation at Vicenza in 1529, and in the original Latin at Paris in 1577; the *De Monarchia* in 1559 at Basle. The latter work had been translated into Italian by Marsilio Ficino in the latter half of the fifteenth century. The Letter to Henry VII was first published in an old Italian version in 1547; in its original Latin by Witte in 1827.

The *Epistle to Can Grande* was first published in 1700, the *Eclogues* in 1719. The letters as a whole were first edited by Witte in 1827, and by Torri in 1842.

There are complete editions of the *Opere Minori*, with annotations and commentaries, by Fraticelli in three volumes (vol. i. *Canzoniere* and *Eclogues*; vol. ii. *Vita Nuova*, *De Monarchia*, *De Aqua et Terra*; vol. iii. *Convivio* and *Epistles*), 4 lire each, often reprinted; and by G. B. Giuliani in four volumes (*Vita Nuova* and *Canzoniere*; *Convito*; *Opere Latine*, 2 vols.). A critical edition of the *Opere Minori* is in preparation under the auspices of the Società dantesca italiana, but only the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* has as yet been published (edited by P. Rajna. Florence, 1896); such an edition of the *Canzoniere* is specially needed, and is being prepared by Prof. Michele Barbi. There are excellent editions of the *De Monarchia* edited by Witte (Leipzig, 1874); of the *Vita Nuova*, by Witte (Leipzig, 1876, 3 marks), by Alessandro d'Ancona (2nd edition, 5 lire. Pisa, 1884), by Casini (Florence, 1891, 1.80 lire), by G. L. Passerini (with a *Sommario della vita di Dante*, 1.25 lire. Turin, 1897). An *edizione minore* of Pio Rajna's critical edition of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* is published for one lira (Florence, 1897).

The best English translations of the Minor Works are the following: the *Vita Nuova*, by D. G. Rossetti in *Dante and his Circle*, 6/- (Part i. Dante's *Vita Nuova*, Poets of Dante's Circle; Part ii. Poets chiefly before Dante), and by C. E. Norton (*The New Life translated with Essays and Notes*. London, 1893, 5/-); the *Convivio*, by K. Hillard (*The Banquet of Dante*. London, 1889, 7/6); the *De Monarchia*, by F. J. Church (London, 1878), and by P. H. Wicksteed (Hull, 1896, etc., 1/9); of the *Letters* by C. S. Latham (*Dante's eleven Letters*. Boston and London, 6/-), and by P. H. Wicksteed (*A provisional translation of the Political Letters*. Hull, 1898, 7d.); also the *Eclogues* in his *Early Lives of Dante*, etc., as above); the *Canzoniere* by C. Lyell (*Dante's Lyrical Poems*. London, 1845, etc.); the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, by A. G. F. Howell (London, 1890). The *Canzoniere* and *Eclogues* are also translated by Plumptre in the second volume of his *Commedia and Canzoniere of Dante* (London, 1892).

In addition to the above, see the sections on the Minor Works in Scartazzini's *Prolegomeni*, *Hand-Buch*, *Companion*, or *Dantologia*. Also F. Selmi, *Il Convito, sua cronologia, disegno*, etc. (Turin, 1865); Witte's *Dante's Trilogy* and Wicksteed's Appendix to the same in the English edition of Witte's *Essays on Dante* (as above); Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*; F. d'Ovidio on the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (*Saggi Critici*. Naples, 1878); Kannegiesser and Witte, *Dante Alighieri's lyrische Gedichte* (2 vols. Leipzig, 1842); Carducci on the *Canzoniere* (*Studi Letterari*). Gaspary, *Early Italian Literature* (translated by H. Oelsner. London, 1901); P. H. Wicksteed and E. G. Gardner, *Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio*, including a critical edition of the *Eclogues* (Westminster, 1901); E. G. Gardner, *Dante's Lyrical Poetry* (in preparation).

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## E. THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

### (i.) *Editions with Notes and Commentaries*

The first three editions of the *Divina Commedia* were printed in 1472, at Fuligno, Mantua, and Jesi. They were reprinted, together with the Neapolitan edition of 1477, by Lord Vernon and Panizzi: *Le Prime Quattro Edizioni della Divina Commedia letteralmente ristampate* (London, 1858). The first Venetian edition is dated 1477, the first Florentine 1481. There were about fifteen editions of the *Divina Commedia* published before the end of the fifteenth century. The First Aldine was printed in 1502.

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Vernon, W. W., *Readings on the Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, chiefly based upon the Commentary of Benvenuto da Imola*. 6 vols. (two on each part. 24s. or 30s.). London, 1894-1901. Italian text, English translation, very complete commentary.

*La Divina Commedia riveduta nel testo e commentata* da G. A. Scartazzini. 3 vols. Leipzig, 1874-1890. 26 marks. (The famous *Leipzig Commentary*. Vol. iv. contains the *Prolegomeni*.) *Edizione Minore*, in one volume, Milan, 1893 and 1896. 4'50 lire.

*Commedia di Dante Alighieri, preceduta dalla vita, etc., da* A. Lubin. Padua, 1881. 20 lire.

*La Divina Commedia con il commento* di T. Casini. Florence, 5th edition, 1895. 4 lire.

*La Divina Commedia, illustrata nei luoghi e nelle persone. A cura di* C. Ricci. Milan, 1897. 40 lire.

The many times reprinted editions with commentaries by Fraticelli and Bianchi are now somewhat out of date. The commentaries of the Jesuit Cornoldi (Rome, 1887) and the Dominican Berthier (Freiburg, 1892, etc.) are mainly valuable from the theological point of view.



(ii.) *Introductions*

R. W. Church, *Dante: an Essay*, 5/-; M. F. Rossetti, *A Shadow of Dante*, 3/6; J. A. Symonds, *An Introduction to the Study of Dante*, 7/6; P. H. Wicksteed, *Dante: Six Sermons*. 2/-.

(iii.) *Subsidiary to the Divina Commedia*

Agnelli, G., *Topocronografia del Viaggio Dantesco*. Milan, 1891. 16 lire.  
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Vernon and Lacaita. 5 vols. Florence, 1887.

Fay, E. A., *Concordance of the Divina Commedia*. Cambridge, Mass., 1888, and London, 1894. 50/-.

Gardner, E. G., *Dante's Ten Heavens: a Study of the Paradiso* (with a chapter on the *Letters*). 2nd edition revised. Westminster, 1900. 12/.

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Perez, P., *I sette cerchi del Purgatorio, etc.* Milan, 1896.

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The *Giornale Dantesco* and the *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana* are published monthly, under the direction of Count G. L. Passerini and Prof. M. Barbi respectively.

Of the numerous English translations of the *Divina Commedia*, other than the prose translations included with the text under (i.), may be mentioned Cary's and Longfellow's; Hazelfoot's in *terza rima*; C. E. Norton's in prose; G. Musgrave's of the *Inferno* in the nine-line metre of Spenser; C. L. Shadwell's of the *Purgatorio* in the metre used by Andrew Marvell in his Horatian 'Ode to Cromwell.' The *terza rima* is a measure not easily adapted to English speech. First introduced into English by Chaucer, with the modifications which the difference of our prosody from the Italian requires, in two fragments of *A Complaint to his Lady* (Minor Poems vi. in Skeat's *Student's Chaucer*), it was used

by Wyatt and Surrey, by Sir Philip Sidney and other Elizabethans, and even once by Milton (in his paraphrase of Psalm ii.). Among the few notable English poems in *terza rima* written during the present century, Shelley's unfinished *Triumph of Life* stands supreme, and in it we may in very truth—

Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

Of him who, from the lowest depths of hell,  
Through every paradise and through all glory,  
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

The words of hate and awe ; the wondrous story  
How all things are transfigured except Love.

## APPENDIX

I. DIAGRAM OF THE UNIVERSE

II. CLOCK OF THE DIVINE COMEDY

III. TABLE OF HELL

IV. TABLE OF PURGATORY

V. TABLE OF PARADISE

VI. THE MYSTIC ROSE OF PARADISE

VII. PRINCIPAL SOVEREIGNS CONTEMPORARY  
WITH DANTE

# I. DIAGRAM OF THE UNIVERSE IN THE DIVINE COMEDY

A=Jerusalem, crowned by Calvary; B=Italy, and, presumably, the Dark Wood; C=Centre of Earth; D=Spain, the Western limit of the inhabited world; E=The Ganges, the Eastern limit; F=Hell; G=Purgatory, crowned by Eden, H.

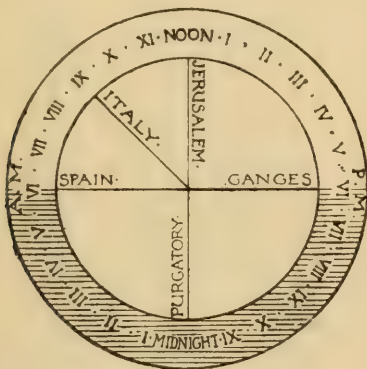




## II. CLOCK MARKING SIMULTANEOUS HOURS AT DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE EARTH

[After Dr. E. Moore's *Time-References in the Divina Commedia*.]

To indicate changes of hour, the reader may imagine the rim of the clock to revolve *counterclockwise*, while the five hands remain stationary, or the hands to revolve *clockwise*, while the rim remains stationary.



Thus, for example, *Purg.* xxvii. 1-5, the sun was rising at Jerusalem, 'there where his Maker shed His blood,' when it was midnight in Spain (on the Ebro) and noon in India, 'the waves in Ganges burnt by noon'; and therefore sunset in Purgatory: 'wherefore the day was departing, when the Angel of God joyfully appeared to us.'

## III. HELL

## CANTOS

Dark Wood.	Leopard, Lion, and Wolf. Guidance of Virgil.	i.-ii.
Gate of Hell.		iii.
Ante-Hell.	Cowards and neutrals, men and Angels. St. Celestine v. (Some place Slothful, <i>Accidiosi</i> , here.)	iii.
Acheron.	Charon's boat.	iii.
Brink of the Abyss.		iv.
Circle I. (Limbo.)	Unbaptized Children and Virtuous Heathen. The Noble Castle. Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Lucan. Electra, Hector, Æneas, Cæsar; Camilla, Penthésilæa, Latinus, Lavinia; the elder Brutus, Lucretia, Julia, Martia, Cornelia. The Saladin. Aristotle; Socrates, Plato; Democritus, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, Thales, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zeno, Dioscorides; Orpheus, Cicero, Livy, Seneca; Euclid and Ptolemy; Hippocrates, Avicenna, Galen; Averrhoës.	iv.
Circle II.	Minos. The Lustful: Semiramis, Dido, Cleopatra, Helen, Achilles, Paris, Tristram; Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Polenta.	v.
Circle III.	Cerberus. The Gluttonous: Ciaccio of Florence.	vi.
Circle IV.	Plutus. Avaricious and Prodigal (none recognisable).	vii.
Circle V. (Styx.)	The Slothful? Angry and Sullen. Phlegyas and his boat. Filippo Argenti.	vii.-viii.
Walls of City of Dis.	Fiends and Furies. The Messenger of Heaven.	viii.-ix.

Outside ethical scheme of Hell, because unknown to Aristotle as sin. Some regard this circle, with Ante-Hell, as representing *Negative Incontinence*.

*Incontinence.*

## HELL—continued.

CANTOS

Circle VI.	Heretics. Epicurus and his followers. Farinata degli Uberti, Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti; Frederick II, Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini; Pope Anastasius.	Outside ethical scheme. Intermediate between <i>Incontinence</i> and <i>Violence</i> . Some regard this Circle as included in <i>Bestiality</i> , or as <i>Negative Violence</i> .	ix.-xi.
Precipice.	The Minotaur.		xii.
	(1) In the river Phlegethon, the violent against others, tyrants and murderers; Alexander the Great, Dionysius of Sicily; Ezzelino, Obizzo da Esti; Guy de Montfort; Attila, Pyrrhus, Sextus Pompeius; Rinier da Corneto, Rinier Pazzo. Chiron, Nessus, Pholus and other centaurs.		xii.
	(2) In the wood of harpies and hell-hounds, the violent against themselves, suicides and squanderers; Pietro delle Vigne; Lano of Siena, Jacopo da Sant' Andrea; a Florentine suicide.		xiii.
Circle VII.	(3) On the burning sand :— (a) The violent against God; Capaneus. (b) The violent against Nature; Brunetto Latini; Priscian, Francesco d'Accorso, Andrea de' Mozzi; Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio, Jac. Rusticucci, Guglielmo Borsiere. (c) The violent against Art (Usurers); unrecognisable individuals of Gianfigliuzzi and Ubbriachi, and one of the Paduan Scrovigni, expecting Vitaliano and Giovanni Buiamonte.	<i>Violence</i> or <i>Bestiality</i> .	xiv.-xvii.

## HELL—continued.

## CANTOS

Great Abyss.	Geryon.		
	(1) Panders and Seducers ; Venedico Caccianimico, Jason. Horned Devils.		xvii.
	(2) Flatterers ; Alessio Interminci, Thais.		xviii.
	(3) Simoniacs ; Nicholas III, awaiting Boniface VIII and Clement v.		xviii.
	(4) Soothsayers and Sorcerers ; Amphiarus, Tiresias, Aruns, Manto, Eurypylus, Michael Scot, Guido Bonatti, Asdente of Parma.		xix.
	(5) Barrators ; the Elder of Lucca, Ciampolo, Frate Gomita, Michael Zanche. Malacoda and the Malebránche.	} <i>Fraud, Malice.</i>	xx.
	(6) Hypocrites ; two Frati Godenti of Bologna (Catalano and Loderingo) ; Caiaphas and Annas.		xxi.-xxiii.
	(7) Thieves ; Vanni Fucci ; Cacus ; Cianfa Donati, Guercio Cavalcanti, Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso (Donati or degli Abati), Puccio de' Galigai.		xxiii.
	(8) Evil Counsellors ; Ulysses and Diomed ; Guido da Montefeltro.		xxiv.-xxv.
			xxvi.-xxvii.

Circle VIII.  
(Malebolge.)



Circle VIII.—contd. (Malebolge.)	(9) Sowers of Scandal and Schism ; Mahomet, Ali, Pier da Medicina, Curio, Mosca, Bertran de Born ; Geri del Bello.  (10) Falsifiers ; Griffolino, Capocchio ; Gianni Schicchi, Myrrha ; Adam of Brescia, one of the Counts of Romena ; Potiphar's wife ; Sinon.	} <i>Fraud, Malice.</i>	xxviii.-xxix.
Well of Giants.	Nimrod, Ephialtes, Briareus, Antæus, Tityus, Typhon.		xxix.-xxx.
Circle IX. (Cocytus.)	(1) In Caïna ; traitors to their kindred ; Alessandro and Napoleone degli Alberti, Mordred, Focaccia, Sassolo Mascheroni, Camicione dei Pazzi.	} <i>Treachery, Malice.</i>	xxxii.-xxxiv.
	(2) In Antenora ; traitors to their country ; Bocca degli Abati, Buoso da Duera, Tesauro Beccaria, Gianni de' Soldanieri, Tebaldello, Ganalon, Count Ugolino and Abp. Ruggieri.		
	(3) In Ptolomæa ; traitors to their guests ; Alberigo de' Manfredi, Branca d'Oria.		
	(4) In Judecca ; traitors to their benefactors and their lords ; Judas, Brutus, Cassius.		
Centre of the Earth.	Lucifer.		xxxiv.

## IV. PURGATORY

CANTOS

Shore of Island.	Cato. Angel of Faith. Cassella.		i.-ii.
Foot of Mountain.	Contumacious, but repentant ; Manfredi.		iii.
Gap where Ascent begins.			iv.
	Penitence deferred through Indolence ; Belacqua.		iv.
	Violently slain unabsolved ; Jacopo del Cassero, Buonconte, Pia, Guccio de' Tarlati, Benincasa, Federico Novello, Farinata degli Scornigiani, Orso, Pierre de la Brosse.	Negligence through lack of Love.	v.-vi.
Ante-Purgatory.	In Valley of Princes : Sordello ; Rudolph of Hapsburg, Ottocar of Bohemia ; Philip III of France, Henry III of Navarre ; Peter III of Aragon, Charles I of Anjou ; Alfonso III of Aragon ; Henry III of England ; William of Montferrat ; Nino Visconti, Conrad Malaspina. Serpent, and two Angels of Hope.		vi.-viii.
Gate of St. Peter.	(Dream of Eagle ; St. Lucy). Angel Confessor of Obedience.		ix.
First Terrace.	Purgation of Pride. Omerto Aldobrandeschi, Oderisi of Gubbio, Provenzano Salvani, Alighiero I.		x.-xii.
Steps.	Angel of Humility.	Sins of the Spirit, or Love distorted.	xii.
Second Terrace.	Purgation of Envy. Sapia of Siena, Guido del Duca, Rinier da Calvoli.		xiii.-xiv.
Steps.	Angel of Fraternal Love.		xv.
Third Terrace.	Purgation of Anger. Marco Lombardo.		xv.-xvii.

PURGATORY—*continued.*

CANTOS

Steps.	Angel of Meekness.		xvii.
Fourth Terrace.	(Virgil's discourse of Love.) Purgation of Sloth. Abbot of San Zeno. (Dream of Siren.)	} Love defective.	xvii.- xix.
Steps.	Angel of Zeal (or Diligence).		xix.
Fifth Terrace.	Purgation of Avarice and Pro- digality. Adrian v ; Hugh Capet ; Statius (who joins Virgil and Dante).	} Sins of the Flesh, or Love ex- cessive.	xix.- xxii.
Steps.	Angel of Justice (or Liber- ality).		xxii.
Sixth Terrace.	Purgation of Gluttony. Forese Donati ; Bonagiunta of Lucca ; Martin iv ; Ubaldo degli Ubaldini ; Abp. Boni- face of Ravenna ; Marchese of Forlì.		xxii.- xxiv.
Steps.	Angel of Temperance. (Sta- tius on Generation.)		xxiv.- xxv.
Seventh Terrace.	Purgation of Lust. Guido Guinicelli, Arnaldo Dani- ello.		xxv.- xxvi.
Purging Fire.	Angel of Chastity.		xxvii.
Last Steps.	Cherubim with flaming sword ? (Dream of Leah.)		xxvii.
EARTHLY PARA- DISE.	Matilda. Triumph of the Church. BEA- TRICE. Mystical Tree of the Empire. Lethe and Eunoë.	} Eden State of Inno- cence Re- gained.	xxviii.- xxxiii.

## V. PARADISE

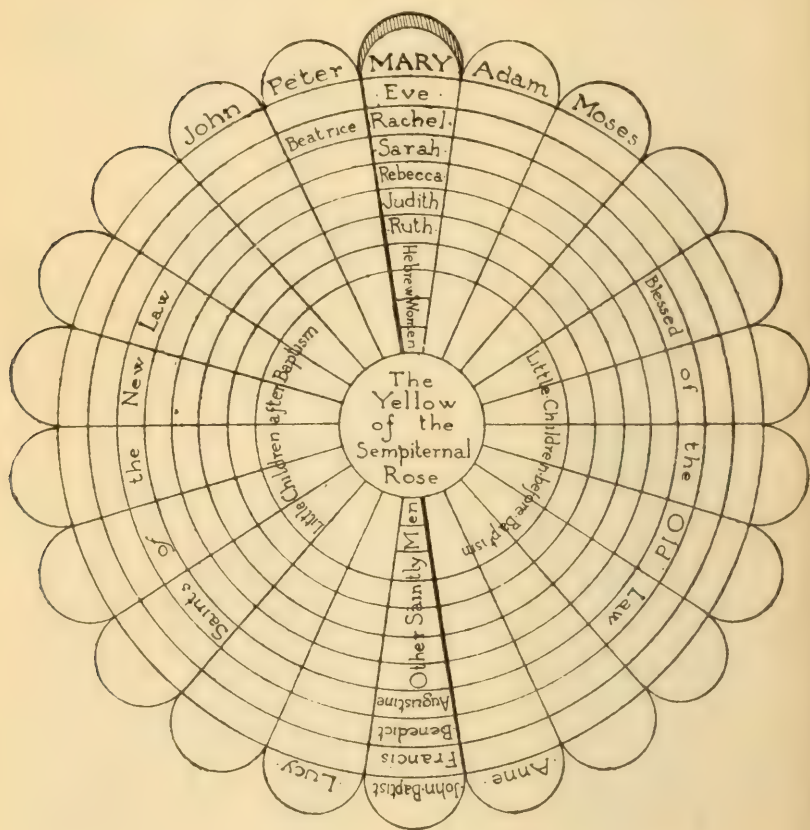
<i>The Spheres.</i>	<i>Angelical Orders.</i>	<i>Sciences.</i>	<i>Virtues.</i>	<i>CANTOS</i>
	The Order of the Universe and the Eternal Law.			i.
First Heaven, of the Moon.	(Physical phenomena the work of Celestial Intelligences.) Inconstant in vows; Piccarda Donati and Empress Constance. (Freedom of the Will.)		Faith imperfect.	ii.-v.
Second Heaven, of Mercury.	Ambitious spirits of the Active Life; Justinian and Romeo. (The Roman Empire and the Mystery of Redemption.)	Logic.	Hope turned aside.	v.-vii.
Third Heaven, of Venus.	Purified Lovers; Carlo Martello, Cuntizza, Folco, Rahab. (Constitution of Society and bad government.)	Rhetoric.	Charity perverted.	viii.-ix.
Termination of Earth's Shadow.				ix.
Fourth Heaven, of the Sun.	Doctors and Teachers. Aquinas, Albert, Gratian, Peter Lombard, Solomon, Dionysius, Orosius, Boethius, Isidore, Bede, Richard, Sigieri. Bonaventura, Agostino and Illuminato, Hugh, Peter Comestor, Peter of Spain, Nathan, Chrysostom, Anselm, Ælius Donatus, Rabanus, Joachim. (Work of SS. Francis and Dominic; wisdom of Solomon; glory of risen body.)	Arithmetic.	Prudence.	x.-xiv.



## PARADISE—continued.

<i>The Spheres.</i>	<i>Angelic Orders.</i>	<i>Sciences.</i>	<i>Virtues.</i>	<i>CANTOS</i>
<b>Fifth Heaven,</b> of Mars.	Warriors forming Crucifix. Cacciaguida ; Joshua, Judas Maccabæus, Charlemagne, Orlando, William of Aquitaine, Rinaldo, Godefroy de Bouillon, Guiscard. (Florence ; Dante's exile and life-work.)	<i>Virtues</i> (imitate Divine Strength and Fortitude ; work signs ; inspire endurance).	Music.	Fortitude. xiv.- xviii.
<b>Sixth Heaven,</b> of Jupiter.	Rulers form Imperial Eagle. David ; Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, William II. of Sicily, Rhipheus. (Justice, divine and human.)	Dominations (image of Divine Dominion).	Justice.	xviii.- xx.
<b>Seventh Heaven,</b> of Saturn.	Contemplative spirits ; Peter Damian, Benedict, Macarius, Romualdus. (Predestination ; the ascetic life ; God's vengeance on corruption.)	Thrones (imitate Divine steadfastness ; execute God's judgments ; purify).	Temperance.	xxi.- xxii.
<b>Celestial Ladder.</b>				xxii.
<b>Eighth Heaven,</b> of the Fixed Stars.	Triumph of Christ ; Assumption of Mary ; Peter, James, and John ; Adam. (Theological Virtues ; St. Peter's rebuke of corruption in Church.)	Cherubim (image of Divine Wisdom ; spread knowledge of God ; illuminate).	Faith, Hope, and Charity, perfected.	xxiii.- xxvii.
<b>Ninth Heaven,</b> the Crystalline.	The Angelic Hierarchies. (Creation as illustrating the Divine Love.)	Seraphim (image of Divine Love ; render perfect).	Natural Philosophy.	xxvii.- xxix.
<b>Tenth Heaven,</b> the Empyrean.	The Essential Paradise of Angels and Saints. (Throne of Henry VII.) Bernard, Blessed of the Mystic Rose. Gabriel. Blessed Virgin Mary.	Moral Philosophy.	Divine Science of Theology.	xxx.- xxxiii.
	Beatific Vision of the Divine Essence.			xxxiii.

## VI. THE MYSTIC ROSE OF PARADISE



# VII. PRINCIPAL SOVEREIGNS CONTEMPORARY WITH DANTE

(1265-1321)

## POPES

CLEMENT IV, 1264-1268.

[*Purg.* iii. 125.]

B. GREGORY X, 1271-1276.

B. INNOCENT V, 1276.

ADRIAN V, 1276.

[*Purg.* xix. 100, etc.]

JOHN XXI, 1276-1277.

[*Par.* xii. 134.]

NICHOLAS III, 1277-1280.

[*Inf.* xix. 67, etc.]

MARTIN IV, 1281-1285.

[*Purg.* xxiv. 22.]

HONORIUS IV, 1285-1287.

NICHOLAS IV, 1288-1292.

ST. CELESTINE V, 1294.

[*Inf.* iii. 60 ; *Inf.* xxvii. 105.]

BONIFACE VIII, 1294-1303.

[*Inf.* xix. 53, 76, etc. ; xxvii. 70, 85, etc. ; *Purg.* viii. 131 ; xx. 87 ; xxxii. 156 ; *Par.* ix. 126 ; xii. 90 ; xvii. 50 ; xxvii. 22 ; xxx. 148 ; *Mon.* iii. 3 ? ; *Epist.* viii. 10 ?.]

B. BENEDICT XI, 1303-1304.

[Apparently nowhere mentioned in Dante's works, though some identify him with the *Veltro* of *Inf.* i., and others with the 'defunct high-priest' of *Epist.* viii. 10.]

CLEMENT V, 1305-1314.

[*Inf.* xix. 83, etc. ; *Purg.* xxxii. 148, etc. ; *Par.* xvii. 82 ; xxvii. 58 ; xxx. 142 ; *Epist.* v. 10 ; vii. 7 ; viii. 4.]

JOHN XXII, 1316-1334.

[*Par.* xviii. 130 ? xxvii. 58.]

## EMPERORS

RUDOLPH OF HAPSBURG, 1272-1292.

[*Purg.* vi. 103 ; vii. 94 ; *Par.* viii. 72 ; *Conv.* iv. 3.]

ADOLPH OF NASSAU, 1292-1298.

[*Conv.* iv. 3.]

ALBERT OF HAPSBURG, 1298-1308.

[*Purg.* vi. 97, etc. ; *Par.* xix. 115 ; *Conv.* iv. 3.]

HENRY OF LUXEMBURG, HENRY VII, 1308-1313.

[*Purg.* vii. 96 ; *Par.* xvii. 82 ; xxx. 133, etc. ; *Epist.* v., vi., vii.]

LOUIS OF BAVARIA, 1314-1347.

## KINGS OF FRANCE

ST. LOUIS IX, 1226-1270.

[Not mentioned by Dante ; unless, perhaps, indirectly in *Purg.* vii. 128, and xx. 50, 61, 66.]

PHILIP III, 1270-1285.

[*Purg.* vii. 103, 105.]

PHILIP IV, 1285-1314.

[*Inf.* xix. 87 ; *Purg.* vii. 109 ; xx. 91 ; xxxii. 152 ; *Par.* xix. 120 ; *Epist.* viii. 4.]

LOUIS X, 1314-1316.

PHILIP V, 1316-1322.

## KINGS OF ENGLAND

HENRY III, 1216-1272.

[*Purg.* vii. 131.]

EDWARD I, 1272-1307.

[*Purg.* vii. 132 ; *Par.* xix. 122.]

EDWARD II, 1307-1327.

## KINGS OF NAPLES AND SICILY

MANFREDI OF SUABIA, 1258-1266.

[*Purg.* iii. 112, etc. ; *V. E.* i. 12.]

CHARLES I OF ANJOU, 1266-1282.

[*Inf.* xix. 99 ; *Purg.* vii. 113, 124 ; xi. 137 ; xx. 67, etc.]



(After the Sicilian Vespers, Sicily under House of Aragon separated from Angevin Naples.)

## KINGS OF NAPLES

CHARLES I OF ANJOU, 1282-1285.

CHARLES II OF ANJOU, 1285-1309.

[*Purg.* v. 69 ; vii. 126 ; xx. 79 ; *Par.* vi. 106 ; xix. 127 ; xx. 63 ; *Conv.* iv. 6 ; *V. E.* i. 12.]

ROBERT OF ANJOU, 1309-1343.

[*Par.* viii. 76, etc., 147 ; *Epist.* vii. 7 ; perhaps the 'Goliath' of *Epist.* vii. 8, and the 'Polyphemus' of *Eclogue* ii.]

## KINGS OF SICILY

PETER III OF ARAGON, 1282-1285.

JAMES II OF ARAGON, 1285-1296.

FREDERICK II OF ARAGON, 1296-1337.

[*Purg.* iii. 116 ; vii. 119 ; *Par.* xix. 130 ; xx. 63 ; *Conv.* iv. 6 ; *V. E.* i. 12.]

## KINGS OF ARAGON

JAMES I, 1213-1276.

PETER III, 1276-1285. (Also King of Sicily after 1282.)

[*Purg.* vii. 112, 125, etc.]

ALFONSO III, 1285-1291.

[*Purg.* vii. 116.]

JAMES II, 1291-1327. (King of Sicily from 1285 to 1296.)

[*Purg.* iii. 116 ; vii. 119 ; *Par.* xix. 137.]



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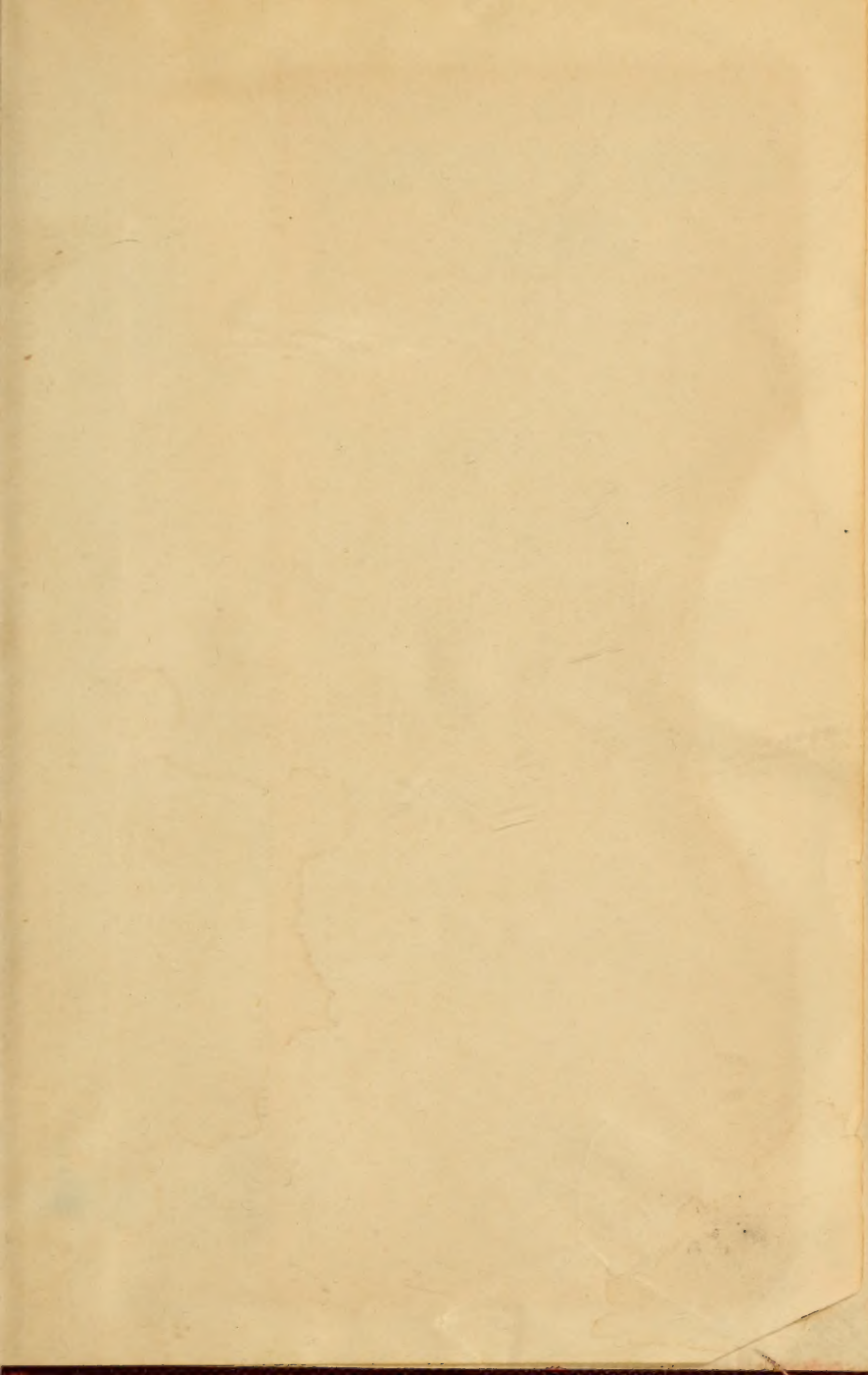
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